

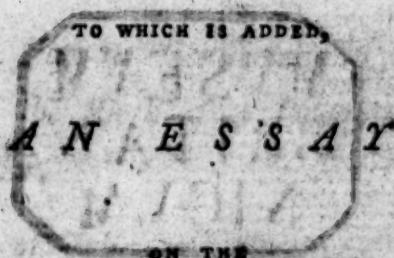
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LETTERS

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FOR

LITERARY LADIES.



NOBLE SCIENCE OF SELF-JUSTIFICATION.

*By Mrs. Edgeworth*

LONDON:

Printed for J. JOHNSON, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

MDCCCXCV.

A

LETTERS

LITERARY LADIES



ROBERT SCOTT OF THE INSTITUTION

LONDON

Printed by J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard

MDCCLXXV



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upon the Birth of a Daughter, with the  
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Give you a daughter—a girl like this

make none.

LETTER

FROM A

GENTLEMAN TO HIS FRIEND

UPON THE

BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER.

Your general ideas of the habits

I Congratulate you, my dear Sir,  
upon the birth of your daughter;  
and I wish that some of the Fairies  
of ancient times were at hand to en-  
dow the damsel with health, wealth,  
wit, and beauty.—With—I should  
make a long pause before I accepted of

And

B

this



this gift for a daughter—you would make none.

As I know it to be your opinion, that it is in the power of education, more certainly than it was ever believed to be in the power of Fairies, to bestow all mental gifts; and as I have heard you say that education should begin as early as possible, I am in haste to offer you my sentiments, lest my advice should come too late.

Your general ideas of the habits and virtues essential to the perfection of the female character nearly agree with mine; but we differ materially as to the cultivation, which it is necessary or expedient to bestow upon the understandings of women: you are a champion for the rights of woman, and

insist upon the equality of the sexes.  
 But since the days of chivalry are past,  
 and since modern gallantry permits  
 men to speak, at least to one another,  
 in less sublime language of the fair, I  
 may confess to you that I see neither  
 in experience or analogy much reason  
 to believe that, in the human species  
 alone, there are no marks of inferiority  
 in the female;—curious and admirable  
 exceptions there may be, but many  
 such have not fallen within my obser-  
 vation. I cannot say that I have been  
 much enraptured either on a first view  
 or on a closer inspection with female  
 prodigies. Prodigies are scarcely less  
 offensive to my taste than monsters;  
 humanity makes us refrain from ex-  
 pressing disgust at the awkward shame of

the one, whilst the intemperate vanity of the other justly provokes ridicule and indignation. I have always observed in the understandings of women who have been too much cultivated, some disproportion between the different faculties of their minds. One power of the mind undoubtedly may be cultivated at the expence of the rest, as we see that one muscle or limb may acquire excessive strength and an unnatural size, at the expence of the health of the whole body : I cannot think this desirable either for the individual or for society.—The unfortunate people in certain mountains of Switzerland are, some of them, proud of the excrescence by which they are deformed. I have seen women vain of exhibiting  
 mental



mental deformities, which to me appeared no less disgusting. In the course of my life it has never been my good fortune to meet with a female whose mind, in strength, just proportion, and activity, I could compare to that of a sensible man.—

Allowing, however, that women are equal to our sex in natural abilities, from their situation in society, from their domestic duties, their taste for dissipation, their love of romance, poetry, and all the lighter parts of literature, their time must be so fully occupied, that they could never have leisure, even supposing that they had inclination, for that severe application to which our sex submit.—Between persons of equal genius, and equal in-

dustry, time becomes the only measure of their acquirements——Now calculate the time, which is wasted by the fair sex, and tell me how much the start of us they ought to have in the beginning of the race, if they are to reach the goal before us?—It is not possible that women should ever be our equals in knowledge, unless you assert that they are far our superiors in natural capacity.——Not only time but opportunity must be wanting to complete female studies—we mix with the world without restraint, we converse freely with all classes of people, with men of wit, of science, of learning, with the artist, the mechanic, the labourer ; every scene of life is open to our view ;—every assistance, that foreign

reign or domestic ingenuity can invent, to encourage literary studies, is ours almost exclusively. From academies, colleges, public libraries, private associations of literary men, women are excluded, if not by law, at least by custom, which cannot easily be conquered

—Whenever women appear, even when we seem to admit them as our equals in understanding, every thing assumes a different form; our politeness, delicacy, habits towards the sex forbid us to argue, or to converse with them as we do with one another—we see things as they are, but women must always see things through a veil, or cease to be women.—With these insuperable difficulties in their education and in their passage through life, it



seems impossible that their minds should ever acquire that vigour and efficiency, which accurate knowledge and various experience of life and manners can bestow.

Much attention has lately been paid to the education of the female sex, and you will say, that we have been amply repaid for our care—That ladies have lately exhibited such brilliant proofs of genius as must dazzle and confound their critics. I do not ask for proofs of genius,—I ask for solid proofs of utility. In which of the useful arts, in which of the exact sciences have we been assisted by female sagacity or penetration?—I should be glad to see a list of discoveries, of inventions, of observations, evincing patient

patient research, of truths established upon actual experiment, or deduced by just reasoning from previous principles—If these or any of these can be presented by a female champion for her sex, I shall be the first to clear the way for her to the Temple of Fame.

I must not speak of my contemporaries, else candor might oblige me to allow, that there are some few instances of great talents applied to useful purposes—But, except these, what have been the literary productions of women?—In poetry, plays and romances, in the art of imposing upon the understanding by means of the imagination, they have excelled—but to useful literature they have scarcely turned their thoughts—I have never heard of any  
female

female proficient in science—few have pretended to science till within these few years.—I know of none of their inventions, and few of their discoveries.

You will tell me, that in the most difficult and most extensive science of politics women have succeeded—you will cite the names of some illustrious queens—I am inclined to think, with the Duke of Burgundy, that “queens who reigned well were governed by men, and kings who reigned ill were governed by women.”

The isolated examples of a few heroines cannot convince me that it is safe or expedient to trust the sex with power—their power over themselves has regularly been found to diminish, in proportion as their power over others



others has been encreased.—I should not refer you to the scandalous chronicles of modern times, to volumes of private anecdotes, or to the abominable secret histories of courts, where female influences, and female depravity are synonymous terms, but I appeal to the open equitable page of history, to a body of evidence collected from the testimony of ages, for experiments tried upon the grandest scale of which nature admits, registered by various hands without the possibility of collusion and without a view to any particular system—from these you must be convinced, that similar consequences have uniformly resulted from the same causes in nations the most unlike, and at periods the most distant. Follow  
the

the history of female nature from the court of Augustus, to the court of Lewis the Fourteenth, and tell me whether you can hesitate to acknowledge, that the influence, the liberty, and the *power* of women have been constant concomitants of the moral and political decline of empires.—I say the concomitants: where events are thus invariably connected I might be justified in saying, that they were *causes*—you would call them *effects*, but we need not dispute about the momentary precedence of evils, which are found to be inseparable companions—they may be alternately cause and effect,—the reality of the connexion is established, it may be difficult to ascertain precisely its nature.

You

You will assert, that the fatal consequences which have resulted from our trusting the sex with liberty and power, have been originally occasioned by the subjection and ignorance in which they had previously been held, and of our subsequent folly and imprudence in *throwing the reins of dominion into hands unprepared and uneducated to guide them.* I am at a loss to conceive any system of education that can properly prepare women for the exercise of power:—Cultivate their understandings, “cleanse the visual orb with Euphrasy” and Rue, till they can with one comprehensive glance take in “one half at least of round eternity,” still you have no security that their reason shall govern their conduct.

The



The moral character seems, even amongst men of superior strength of mind, to have no certain dependence upon the reasoning faculty ;—habit, prejudice, taste, example, and the different strength of various passions, form the moral character. We are impelled to action frequently contrary to the belief of our sober reason, and we pursue what we could, in the hour of deliberation, demonstrate to be inconsistent with *that greatest possible share of happiness*, which it is the object of every rational creature to secure. We frequently “ think with one species of enthusiasm, and act with another :” and can we expect from women more consistency of conduct, if they are allowed the same liberty. No one can  
 feel

feel more strongly than you do the necessity and the value of female integrity; no one can more clearly perceive how much in society depends upon the honour of women, and how much it is the interest of every individual, as well as of every state, to guard their virtue, and to preserve inviolate the purity of their manners. Allow me, then, to warn you of the danger of talking in loud strains to the sex of the noble contempt of prejudice. You would look with horror at one who should go to sap the foundations of the building; beware then how you venture to tear away the ivy which clings to the walls, and braces the loose stones together.

I am by no means disposed to indulge in the fashionable ridicule of prejudice. There is a sentimental, metaphysical argument, which, independently of all others, has lately been used to prevail upon us to relinquish that superiority which strength of body in savage, and strength of mind in civilized, nations secures to man. We are told, that as women are reasonable creatures, they should be governed only by reason; and that we *disgrace* ourselves, and *enslave* them when we instil even the most useful truths as prejudices.—Morality should, we are told, be founded upon demonstration, not upon sentiment; and we should not require human beings to submit to any laws or customs, without convincing their understandings of the universal

versal utility of these political conventions. When are we to expect this conviction? We cannot expect it from childhood, scarcely from youth; but, from the maturity of the understanding, we are told that we may expect it with certainty.—And of what use can it then be to us? When the habits are fixed, when the character is decided, when the manners are formed, what can be done by the bare conviction of the understanding? What could we expect from that woman whose moral education was to begin at the moment when she was called upon to *act*; and who without having imbibed in her early years any of the salutary prejudices of her sex, or without having been educated in the amiable acquiescence to well-established maxims of

C

female



female prudence, should boldly venture to conduct herself by the immediate conviction of her understanding? I care not for the names or titles of my guides; all that I shall enquire is, which is best acquainted with the road. Provided women be conducted quietly to their good, it is scarcely worth their while to dispute about the pompous, metaphysical names or precedence of their motives. Why should they deem it disgraceful to be induced to pursue their interest by what some philosophers are pleased to call *weak* motives? Is it not much less disgraceful to be peaceably governed by weak reasons, than to be incapable of being restrained by the strongest? The dignity of human nature, and the boasted free-will of rational

rational agents, are high-sounding words, likely to impose upon the vanity of the fair sex, as well as upon the pride of our's; but if we analyse the ideas annexed to these terms, to what shall we reduce them? Reason in its highest perfection seems just to arrive at the certainty of instinct; and truth, impressed upon the mind in early youth by the united voice of affection and authority, gives all the real advantages of the most investigating spirit of philosophy. If the result of the thought, experience, and sufferings of one race of beings is (when inculcated upon the belief of the next) to be stigmatised as prejudice, there is an end to all the benefits of history and of education. The mutual intercourse of individuals and

of nations must be only for the traffic or amusement of the day. Every age must repeat the same experiments; every man and every nation must make the same mistakes, and suffer the same miseries, whilst the civilization and happiness of the world, if not retrograde in their course, must for ever be stationary.

Let us not, then, despise or teach the other sex to despise the traditional maxims of experience, or those early prepossessions, which may be termed prejudices, but which in reality serve as their moral instinct. I can see neither tyranny on our part, nor slavery on theirs, in this system of education. This sentimental or metaphysical appeal to our candour and generosity has then

then no real force, and every other argument for the *literary* and *philosophical* education of women, and for the extraordinary cultivation of their understandings, I have examined.

You probably imagine, that, by the superior ingenuity and care you propose to bestow on your daughter's education, you shall make her an exception to general maxims, you shall give her all the blessings of a literary cultivation, and at the same time preserve her from all the follies and faults, and evils which have been found to attend the character of a literary lady.

Systems produce projects; and as projects in education are of all others the most hazardous, they should not be followed till after the most mature de-



liberation: though it may be natural, is it wise for any man to expect extraordinary success, from his efforts or his precautions, beyond what has ever been the share of those who have had motives as strong for care and for exertion, and some of whom were possibly his equals in ability? Is it not incumbent upon you, as a parent and as a philosopher, to calculate accurately what you have to fear, as well as what you have to hope. You can at present, with a sober degree of interest, bear to hear me enumerate the evils, and ridicule the foibles, incident to literary ladies; but if your daughter were actually in this class, you would not think it friendly if I were to attack them. In this favourable moment,

then,

then, I beg you to hear me with temper; and as I touch upon every danger and every fault, consider cautiously whether you have a specific remedy or a certain preventative in store for each of them.

Women of literature are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago. They make a class in society, they fill the public eye, and have acquired a degree of consequence and an appropriate character. The esteem of private friends, and the admiration of the public for their talents, are circumstances highly flattering to their vanity, and as such I will allow them to be substantial pleasures. I am also ready to acknowledge that a taste for literature adds much to the happiness

of life, and women may enjoy to a certain degree this happiness as well as men. But with literary women this silent happiness seems at best but a subordinate consideration; it is not by the treasures they possess, but by those which they have an opportunity of displaying, that they estimate their wealth. To obtain public applause, they are betrayed too often into a miserable ostentation of their learning.

Coxe tells us, that certain Russian ladies split their pearls, in order to make a greater display of finery. The pleasure of being admired for wit or erudition, I cannot exactly measure in a female mind, but state it to be as great as you reasonably can suppose it,



it, there are evils attendant upon it, which, in the estimation of a prudent father, may overbalance the good. The intoxicating effect of wit upon the brain, has been well remarked by a poet, who was a friend to the fair sex, and too many ridiculous, and too many disgusting, examples confirm the truth of the observation. The deference that is paid to genius sometimes makes the fair sex forget, that genius will be respected only when united with discretion. Those who have acquired fame, fancy that they can afford to sacrifice reputation. I will suppose, however, that their heads shall be strong enough to bear inebriating admiration; and that their conduct shall be essentially irreproachable, yet they will

will shew in their manners and conversation that contempt of inferior minds, and that neglect of common forms and customs, which will provoke the indignation of fools, and which cannot escape the censure of the wise. Even whilst we are secure of their innocence, we dislike that daring spirit in the female sex, which delights to oppose the common opinions of society, and from apparent trifles we draw unfavourable omens, which experience too often confirms. You will ask me why I should suppose that wits are more liable to be spoiled by admiration than beauties, who have usually a larger share of it, and who are not more exempt from vanity? Those who are vain of trifling accomplishments, of  
rank,

of rank, of riches, or of beauty, depend upon the world for their immediate gratification. They are sensible of their dependence; they listen with deference to the maxims, and attend with anxiety to the opinions of those from whom they expect their reward and their daily amusements. In their subjection consists their safety, whilst women, who neither feel dependent for amusement or for self-approbation upon company and public places, are apt to consider this subjection as humiliating, if not insupportable: perceiving their own superiority, they despise, and even set at defiance, the opinions of their acquaintance of inferior abilities: contempt, where it cannot be openly retorted, produces aversion,

not

not the less to be dreaded, because constrained to silence: envy, considered as the involuntary tribute, extorted by merit, is flattering to pride; and I know, that many women delight to excite envy, even whilst they affect to fear its consequences. But they who imprudently provoke it, are little aware of the torments they prepare for themselves—"cover your face well before you disturb the hornet's nest", was a maxim of the *experienced* Catharine de Medicis.

Men of literature, if we may trust to the bitter expressions of anguish in their writings, and in their private letters, feel acutely all the stings of envy. Women, who have more susceptibility of temper, and less strength of mind,  
and



and who, from the delicate nature of their reputation, are more exposed to attack, are also less able to endure it. Malignant critics, when they cannot attack an author's peace in his writings, frequently scrutinize his private life; and every personal anecdote is published without regard to truth or propriety. How will the delicacy of the female character endure this treatment? how will her friends bear to see her pursued even in domestic retirement, if she should be wise enough to make that retirement her choice? how will they like to see premature memoirs and spurious collections of familiar letters published by needy booksellers or designing enemies? Yet to all these things men of letters are subject; and  
such

such must literary ladies expect, if they attain to any degree of eminence.—

Judging, then, from the experience of our sex, I may pronounce envy to be one of the evils which women of uncommon genius have to dread. “Censure”, says a celebrated writer, “is a tax which every man must pay to the public who seeks to be eminent.”

Women must expect to pay it doubly.

Your daughter, perhaps, shall be above scandal. She shall despise the idle whisper, and the common tattle of her sex; her soul shall be raised above the ignorant and the frivolous; she shall have a relish for higher conversation, and a taste for higher society. But where is she to find this society? how is she to obtain this society? You  
make

make her incapable of friendship with her own sex. Where is she to look for friends, for companions, for equals? Amongst men? Amongst what class of men? Not amongst men of business, or men of gallantry, but amongst men of literature?

I think it is Stuart, who, in speaking of Rousseau, observes that learned men have usually chosen for their wives, or for their companions, women who were rather below than above the standard of mediocrity: this seems to me natural and reasonable. Such men, probably, feel their own incapacity for the daily business of life, their ignorance of the world, their slovenly habits, and neglect of domestic affairs. They do not want wives  
who

who have precisely their own defects; they rather desire to find such as shall, by the opposite habits and virtues, supply their deficiencies. I do not see why two books should marry, any more than two estates. Some few exceptions might be quoted against Stuart's observations. I have just seen, under the article "A Literary Wife", in D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, an account of Francis Phidelpus, a great scholar in the fifteenth century, who was so desirous of acquiring the Greek language in perfection, that he travelled to Constantinople in search of a *Grecian wife*: the lady proved a scold. "But to do justice to the name of Theodora", as this author adds, "she has been honourably mentioned



“ in the French Academy of Sciences.”

I hope this proved an adequate compensation to her husband for his domestic broils.

Happy Madame Dacier! you found a husband suited to your taste! “ You and Monsieur Dacier, if D’Alembert tells the story rightly, once cooked a dish in concert, by a receipt, which you found in Apicius, and you both sat down and eat of your learned ragout till you were both like to die.”

. Were I sure, my dear friend, that every literary lady would be equally fortunate in finding in a husband a man who would sympathise in her tastes, I should diminish my formidable catalogue of evils. But alas! Monsieur Dacier is no more! “ and we shall

D

never

never live to see his fellow." Literary ladies will, I am afraid, be losers in love as well as in friendship, by their superiority.—Cupid is a timid, playful child, and is frightened at the helmet of Minerva. It has been observed, that gentlemen are not apt to admire a prodigious quantity of learning, and masculine acquirements in the fair sex—our sex usually consider a certain degree of weakness, both of mind and body, as friendly to female grace. I am not absolutely of this opinion, yet I do not see the advantage of supernatural force, either of body or mind, to female excellence. Hercules-Spinster found his strength rather an incumbrance than an advantage.

Super-

Superiority of mind must be united with great temper and generosity to be tolerated by those who are forced to submit to its influence. I have seen witty and learned ladies, who did not seem to think it at all incumbent upon them to sacrifice any thing to the sense of propriety. On the contrary, they seemed to take both pride and pleasure in shewing the utmost stretch of their strength, regardless of the consequences, panting only for victory. Upon such occasions, when the adversary has been a husband or a father, I must acknowledge that I have felt sensations, which few ladies can ever believe they excite. Airs and graces I can bear as well as another—but airs without graces, no man thinks

himself bound to bear--and learned  
 airs least of all. Ladies of high rank,  
 in the Court of Parnassus, are apt,  
 sometimes, to claim precedency out of  
 their own dominions, which creates  
 much confusion, and generally ends  
 in their being affronted. That know-  
 ledge of the world, which keeps peo-  
 ple in their proper places, they will  
 never learn from the Muses.

As Moliere has pointed out with all  
 the force of comic ridicule, in the  
 Femmes Savantes, a lady who aspires  
 to the sublime delights of philosophy  
 and poetry, must forego the simple  
 pleasures, and will despise the duties  
 of domestic life. I should not expect  
 that my house affairs would be with  
 haste dispatched by a Desdemona,  
 weep-



weeping over some unvarnished tale, petrified with some history of horrors, deep in a new theory of the earth, or seriously inclined to hear of “Antres vast, and deserts idle”—“and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders”—at the very time when she should be ordering dinner, or paying the butcher’s bill—I should have the less hope of rousing her attention to my culinary concerns and domestic grievances, because I should probably incur her contempt for hinting at these sublunary matters, and her indignation for supposing that she ought to be employed in such degrading occupations. I have heard that if these sublime geniusses are wakened from their reveries by the *appulse* of external cir-

cumstances, they start and exhibit all the perturbation and amazement of *cataleptic* patients.

Sir Charles Harrington, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, addressed a copy of verses to his wife, "on Women's Virtues"—these he divides into "the private, *civill*, and heroyke; the private belong to the country housewife, whom it concerneth chiefly—

" The fruit, malt, hops, to tend, to dry, to utter,

" To beat, strip, spin the wool, the hemp, the flax,

" Breed poultry, gather honey, try the wax,

" And more than all, to have good cheefe and

" butter.

" Then next a step, but yet a large step higher,

" Came civill virtue fitter for the citty,

" With modest looks, good cloths, and answers

" witty;

" These baser things not done, but guided by her."

As

As for heroyke vertue, and heroyke dames, honest Sir Charles would have nothing to do with them.

Allowing, however, that you could combine all these virtues—that you could form a perfect whole, a female wonder from every creature's best, dangers still threaten you. How will you preserve your daughter from that desire of universal admiration, which will ruin all your work? How will you, along with all the pride of knowledge, give her that “retiring modesty” which is supposed to have more charms for our sex than the fullest display of wit and beauty.

The *fair Tboulouse* was so called, because she was so fair that no one could live either with or without beholding

her—whenever she came forth from her own mansion, which history observes she did very seldom, such impetuous crowds rushed to obtain a sight of her, that limbs were broken and lives were lost wherever she appeared. She ventured abroad less frequently—the evil encreased—till at length the magistrates of the city issued an edict commanding the fair Thoulouse, under the pain of perpetual imprisonment to appear in broad day-light for one hour, every week, in the public market-place.

Modern ladies, by frequenting public places so regularly, declare their approbation of the wholesome regulations of these prudent magistrates. Very different was the crafty policy of the Prophet Mahomet, who  
forbad



forbad his worshippers even to paint his picture. The Turks have pictures of the hand, the foot, the features, of Mahomet, but no representation of the whole face or person is allowed. The portraits of our beauties, in our exhibition-room, shew a proper contempt of this insidious policy; and those learned and ingenious ladies, who publish their private letters, select maxims, secret anecdotes, and family memoirs, are entitled to our thanks for thus presenting us with full lengths of their minds.

Can you expect, my dear Sir, that your daughter, with all the genius and learning which you intend to give her, should refrain from these imprudent exhibitions? Will she “ yield her  
 charms

charms of mind with sweet delay?" Will she, in every moment of her life, recollect that the fatal desire for universal admiration always defeats its own purpose, especially if the purpose be to win love as well as admiration? It is in vain to tell me that more enlarged ideas in our sex would alter our tastes, and alter even the associations which now influence our passions. The captive who has numbered the links of his chains, and who has even discovered how those chains are constructed, is not therefore nearer to the recovery of his liberty.

Besides, it must take a length of time to alter associations and opinions, which, if not *just*, are at least *common* in our sex. You cannot expect even  
that

that conviction should operate immediately upon the public taste. You will, in a few years, have educated your daughter; and if the world be not educated exactly at the right time to judge of her perfections, to admire and love them, you will have wasted your labour, and you will have sacrificed your daughter's happiness: that happiness, analyse it as a man of the world or as a philosopher, must depend on friendship, love, the exercise of her virtues, the just performance of all the duties of life, and the self-approbation arising from the consciousness of good conduct.

I am, my dear friend,

Yours sincerely.

AN-

## A N S W E R

TO THE

PRECEDING LETTER.

IF I were not naturally of a sanguine temper, your letter, my dear friend, would fill my mind with so many melancholy fears for the fate of literary women, that I should be tempted to educate my daughter in the secure "bliss of ignorance."

I am sensible that we have no right to try new experiments and fanciful theories at the expence of our fellow-creatures, especially on those who are helpless, and immediately under our  
pro-



protection. Who can estimate the anguish which a parent must feel from the ruin of his child, when joined to the idea that it may have been caused by imprudent education; but reason should never be blinded by sentiment, when it is her proper office to guide and enlighten. There is scarcely any family, I hope, which does not feel within itself the happy effects of the improvements in modern education; but we could never have felt these advantages, if we had resisted all attempts at alteration.

Do not, my dear Sir, call me "*a champion for the rights of women*"; I am more intent upon their happiness than ambitious to enter into a metaphysical discussion of their rights.

Their

Their happiness is so nearly connected with ours, that it seems to me absurd to manage any argument so as to set the two sexes at variance by vain contention for superiority. It is not our object to make an invidious division of rights and privileges, but to determine what is most for our general advantage.

I shall not, therefore, examine with much anxiety how far women are naturally inferior to us either in strength of mind or body. The strength of the one has no necessary connection with the other, I may observe; and intellectual ability has ever conquered mere bodily strength, from the times of Ajax and Ulysses to the present day. In civilized society, that species of superiority

periority which belongs to superior force, is reduced to little in the lowest classes, to less in the higher classes of life.

The invention of fire-arms renders address and presence of mind more than a match for force, or at least reduces to an affair of chance the pretensions of the feeble and the strong. The art of printing has extended the dominion of the mind, as much by facilitating the intercourse and combination of persons of literature, as by the rapid and universal circulation of knowledge. Both these inventions have tended to alter the relative situation of women in modern society.

I acknowledge that, with respect to the opportunities of acquiring knowledge, institution and manners are much  
in

in favour of our sex; but your argument concerning *time* appears to me to be inaccurate. Whilst the knowledge of the learned languages continues to form an indispensable part of a gentleman's education, many years of childhood and youth must be devoted to their attainment. During these studies, the general cultivation of the understanding is in some degree retarded. All the intellectual powers are cramped, except the memory, which is sufficiently exercised, but which is overloaded with words, and with words which are seldom understood. The genius of living and of dead languages differs so much, that the pains which are taken to write elegant Latin, frequently spoil the English style. Girls usually



usually write much better than boys: they think and express their thoughts clearly at an age when young men can scarcely write an easy letter upon any common occasion. Women do not read the best authors of antiquity as school books; but they can have excellent translations of most of them, when they are capable of tasting their beauties. I know that it is supposed no one can judge of the classics by translations; and I am sensible that much of the merit of the originals may be lost; but I think the difference in pleasure is more than overbalanced to women, by the *time* they save, and by the labour and misapplication of abilities which is spared. If they do not acquire a classic taste, neither do they

E

acquire

acquire classic prejudices : nor are they early disgusted with literature, by pedagogues, lexicons, grammars, and all the melancholy apparatus of learning. Field-sports, travelling, gaming, lounging, and what is called pleasure in various shapes, usually fill the interval between quitting the college and settling for life : this period is not lost by the other sex. Women begin to taste the real pleasures of reading just at the age when young men, disgusted with their studies, begin to be ashamed amongst their companions of alluding to literature. . When this period is past, business, the necessity of pursuing a profession, the ambition of shining in parliament, or of rising in public life, occupy a large portion of their

their lives. The understanding is but partially cultivated for these purposes; men of genius must contract their enquiries, and concentrate their powers; they must pursue *the expedient*, even when they distinguish that it is not *the right*, and they are degraded to "*literary artisans\**". The other sex have no such constraint upon their understandings; neither the necessity of earning their bread, nor the ambition to shine in public life, hurry or prejudice their minds; in domestic life, "they have leisure to be wise." Women, who do not love dissipation, must have more time for the cultivation of their understandings, than men can have if you compute the whole of life.

\* Stuart.

You apprehend that knowledge must be hurtful to the sex, because it will be the means of their acquiring power. It seems to me impossible that women can acquire the species of direct power which you dread: the manners of society must totally change before women can mingle with men in the busy and public scenes of life. They must become Amazons before they can effect this change; they must cease to be women before they can desire it. The happiness of neither sex could be increased by this metamorphosis: the object cannot be worth the price. Power, supposing it to be a certain good to its possessor, is like all our other pleasures, capable of being appreciated; and if women are taught to estimate  
 their



their pleasures, they will be governed in their choice by the real, not by the imaginary, value. They will be convinced, not by the voice of the moralist alone, but by their own observation and experience, that power is an evil in most cases; and to those who really wish to do good to their fellow-creatures, it is at best but a painful trust. If, my dear Sir, it be your object to monopolize power for our sex, you cannot possibly better secure it from the wishes of the other, than by enlightening their minds, and enlarging their view of human affairs. The common fault of ignorant and ill-educated women is a love for dominion: this they shew in every petty struggle where they are permitted to act in pri-

vate life. You are afraid that the same disposition should have a larger field for its display ; and you believe this temper to be inherent in the sex. I doubt whether any temper be *natural*, as it is called : certainly this disposition need not be attributed to any innate cause ; it is the consequence of their erroneous education. The belief that pleasure is necessarily connected with the mere exercise of free-will, is a false and pernicious association of ideas, arising from the tyranny of those who have had the management of their childhood, from their having frequently discovered that they have been more happy in chusing about trifles, when they have acted in opposition to the maxims of those who govern

vern them, than when they have followed their advice. I shall endeavour to prevent this from happening in my daughter's early education, and shall thus, I hope, prevent her acquiring any unconquerable prejudice in favour of her own wishes, or any unreasonable desire to influence the opinions of others. People, who have reasons for their preferences and aversions, are never so zealous in the support of their own tastes, as those are who have no arguments either to convince themselves or others that they are in the right. *Power* over the minds of others will not, therefore, in domestic, any more than in public life, be an object of ambition to women of enlarged understandings.

You appeal to history to prove to me that great calamities have ensued whenever the female sex has been indulged with liberty, yet you acknowledge that we cannot be certain whether these evils have been the effects of our trusting them with liberty, or of our not having previously instructed them in the use of it : upon the decision of this rests your whole argument. Women have not erred from having knowledge, but from not having had experience : they may have grown vain and presumptuous when they have learned but little, they will be sobered into good sense when they shall have learned more.

But you fear that knowledge should injure the delicacy of female manners,  
that



that truth would not keep so firm a hold upon the mind as prejudice, and that the conviction of the understanding will never have a permanent, good effect upon the conduct. I agree with you in thinking, that the strength of mind, which makes people govern themselves by reason, is not always connected with abilities in their most cultivated state. I deplore the instances I have seen of this truth; but I do not despair: I am, on the contrary, excited to examine into the causes of this phenomenon in the human mind: nor, because I see some evil, would I sacrifice the good on a motive of bare suspicion. It is a contradiction to say, that to give the power of discerning what is good, is to give a disposition

disposition to prefer what is bad. All that you prove when you say that prejudice, passion, habit, often impel us to act in opposition to our reason, is, that there exist enemies to reason, which have not yet been subdued. Would you destroy her power because she has not been always victorious? rather think on the means by which you may extend her dominion, and secure to her in future the permanent advantages of victory.

Women, whose talents have been much cultivated, have usually had their attention distracted by subordinate pursuits, and they have not been taught that the grand object of life is to be happy; to be prudent and virtuous that they may be happy: their  
ambition

ambition has been directed to the acquisition of knowledge and learning, merely as other women have been excited to acquire accomplishments, for the purposes of ostentation, not with a view to the real advantage of the acquisition. But, from the abuse, you are not to argue against the use of knowledge. Place objects in a just view before the understanding, shew their different proportions, and the mind will make a wise choice. “ You think yourself happy because you are wise”, said a philosopher; “ I think myself wise because I am happy.”

No woman can be happy in society who does not preserve the peculiar virtues of her sex. When this is demonstrated to the understanding, must not  
those

those virtues, and the means of preserving them, become objects of the first and most interesting importance to a sensible woman? I would not rest her security entirely upon this conviction, when I can increase it by all the previous habits of early education: these things are not, as you seem to think, incompatible. Whilst a child has not the use of reason, I would guide it by my reason, and give it such habits as my experience convinces me will tend to its happiness. As the child's understanding is enlarged, I can explain the meaning of my conduct, and habit will then be confirmed by reason: I lose no time, I expose myself to no danger by this system. On the contrary, those who depend merely on the force



force of habit and of prejudice alone, expose themselves to perpetual danger. If once their pupils begin to reflect upon their own hood-winked education, if once their faith is shaken in the dogmas which have been imposed upon them, they will probably believe that they have been deceived in every thing which they have been taught, and they will burst their former bonds with indignation: credulity is always rash in the moment of detection.

You dislike in the female sex that daring spirit which despises the common forms of society, and which breaks through the delicacy and reserve of female manners. So do I. And the best method to make my pupil respect these things, is to shew her how they

are

are indispensably connected with the largest interests of society, and with their highest pleasures. Surely this perception, this view of the utility of forms, apparently trifling, must be a strong security to the sex, and far superior to the automatic habits of those who submit to the conventions of the world, without consideration or conviction. Habit, improved by reason, assumes the rank of virtue. The motives which restrain from vice must be encreased, by the clear conviction that vice and wretchedness are inseparably united.

It is too true that women, who have been but half instructed, who have seen only superficially the relations of moral and political ideas, and who have  
obtained

obtained but an imperfect knowledge of the human heart, have conducted themselves so as to disgrace their talents and their sex: these are conspicuous and melancholy examples, cited oftener with malice than with pity. The benevolent and the wise point out the errors of genius with more care than those of folly, because there is more danger from the example.

I appeal to examples, which every man of literature will immediately recollect amongst our contemporaries, to prove, that where the female understanding has been properly cultivated, women have not only obtained admiration by their useful abilities, but respect by their exemplary conduct.

You very prudently avoid alluding to your contemporaries, but you must  
excuse

excuse me if I cannot omit instances essential to my cause. Modern education has been improved; the fruits of these improvements appear, and you must not forbid me to point them out.

Instead of being ashamed that so little has been hitherto done by female abilities, in science and in useful literature, I am surprised that so much has been effected. Till of late, women were kept in Turkish ignorance; every means of acquiring knowledge was discountenanced by fashion, and impracticable even to those who despised fashion. Our books of science were full of unintelligible jargon, and mystery veiled pompous ignorance from public contempt; but now, writers must offer their discoveries to the public



lic in distinct terms, which every body may understand; technical language will no longer supply the place of knowledge, and the art of teaching has been carried to great perfection by the demand for learning: all this is in favour of women. Many things, which were thought to be above their comprehension, or unsuited to their sex, have now been found to be perfectly within the compass of their abilities, and peculiarly suited to their situation. Botany has become *fashionable*; in time it may become useful, if it be not so already. Science has "*been enlisted under the banners of imagination*", by the irresistible charms of genius; by the same power her votaries will be led *from the looser analogies which dress out*

*the imagery of poetry, to the stricter ones which form the ratiocination of philosophy.\**

Chemistry will follow botany; chemistry is a science particularly suited to women, suited to their talents and to their situation. Chemistry is not a science of parade, it affords occupation and infinite variety; it demands no bodily strength, it can be pursued in retirement, it applies immediately to useful and domestic purposes; and whilst the ingenuity of the most inventive mind may be exercised, there is no danger of inflaming the imagination; the judgment is improved, the mind is intent upon realities, the knowledge that is acquired is exact, and the plea-

\* Preface to Dr. Darwin's Botanic Garden.

sure of the pursuit is a sufficient reward for the labour.

Dr. Johnson says, that "nothing is ever well done that is done by a receipt." Were I attempting to recommend chemistry to certain *Epicurean philosophers*, I should say that a good cook was only an empirical chemist, and that the study of this science would produce a salutary reform in receipt books, and must improve the accomplishments of every lady who unites in her person the offices of housekeeper and wife.

Sir Anthony Absolute, the inveterate foe to literary ladies, declares, that "were he to chuse another helpmate, the extent of her erudition should consist in her knowing her simple

“ letters without their mischievous  
 “ combinations; and the summit of her  
 “ science be—her ability to count as  
 “ far as twenty: the first would enable  
 “ her to work A. A. upon his linen,  
 “ and the latter would be quite suf-  
 “ ficient to prevent her giving him a  
 “ a shirt No. 1. and a stock No. 2.”

Sir Anthony's helpmate would, by  
 the proper application of chemistry,  
 mark A. A. upon his linen, with an  
 ease and expedition unknown to the  
 persevering practitioners of cross-  
 stitch; and the œconomy of his ward-  
 robe and of his house would be bene-  
 fitted by the science of arithmetic and  
 the taste for order. Economy is not  
 the mean, “ penny-wise and pound-  
 foolish policy” which some suppose it



to be ; it is the art of calculation, joined to the habit of order, and the power of proportioning our wishes to the means of gratifying them. \* “ The little pilfering temper of a wife ” is despicable and odious to every husband of sense and taste. But, far from despising domestic duties, women, who have been well educated, will hold them in high respect, because they will see that the whole happiness of life is made up of the happiness of each particular day and hour, and that the enjoyment of these must depend upon the punctual practice of those virtues which are more valuable than splendid. Taste, ingenuity, judgment, are all applicable to the arts of domestic life ; and

\* Parnel.

domestic life will be most preferred by those who have within their own minds a perpetual flow of fresh ideas, who cannot be tempted to dissipation, and who are most capable of enjoying all the real pleasures of friendship and of love.

Since I began this letter, I met with the following pathetic passage, which I cannot forbear transcribing:—

\* “ The greatest part of the observations contained in the foregoing pages were derived from a lady, who is now beyond the reach of being affected by any thing in this sublunary world. Her beneficence of disposition induced her never to

\* J. Anderfon—Essay on the Management of a Dairy.

“ overlook

“ overlook any fact or circumstance,  
 “ that fell within the sphere of her  
 “ observation, which promised to be  
 “ in any respect beneficial to her fel-  
 “ low-creatures. To her gentle in-  
 “ fluence the public are indebted, if  
 “ they be indeed indebted at all, for  
 “ whatever useful hints may at any time  
 “ have dropt from my pen; a being, she  
 “ thought, who must depend so much  
 “ as man does on the assistance of  
 “ others, owes, as a debt to his fellow-  
 “ creatures, the communication of the  
 “ little useful knowledge that chance  
 “ may have thrown in his way. Such  
 “ has been my constant aim; such were  
 “ the views of the wife of my bosom,  
 “ the friend of my heart, who sup-  
 “ ported and assisted me in all my pur-  
 “ suits.

“ suits. I now feel a melancholy satisfaction in contemplating those objects she once delighted to elucidate.”

The elegant Lord Lyttleton, the benevolent Haller, the amiable Dr. Gregory, have all, in the language of affection, poetry, and truth, described the pleasures which men of genius and literature enjoy in a union with women who can sympathise in all their thoughts and feelings; who can converse with them as equals, live with them as friends; who can assist them in the important and delightful duty of educating their children; who can make their family their most agreeable society, and their home the attractive centre of happiness.

Can



Can women of uncultivated understandings make such wives?

Women have not the privilege of choice as we have; but they have the power to determine. Women cannot precisely force the tastes of the person with whom they may be connected, yet their happiness will greatly depend upon their being able to conform their tastes to his. For this reason, I should rather, in female education, cultivate the general powers of the mind than any particular faculty. I do not desire to make my daughter a musician, a painter, or a poetess; I do not desire to make her a botanist, a mathematician, or a chemist; but I wish to give her the habit of industry and attention, the love of knowledge

G

and

and the power of reasoning: these will enable her to attain excellence in any pursuit of science or of literature. Her tastes and her occupations will, I hope, be determined by her situation, and by the wishes of her friends; she will consider all accomplishments and all knowledge as subordinate to her first object, the contributing to their happiness and her own.

I am, my dear friend,

Yours sincerely.

#### ERRATUM.

In the Essay on the Science of Self-Justification,  
p. 10, l. 5, f. 6, dele *never*.

*Knith M. M. M. M.*

*1086. e 29*  
*2*

# LETTERS

OF

JULIA AND CAROLINE.

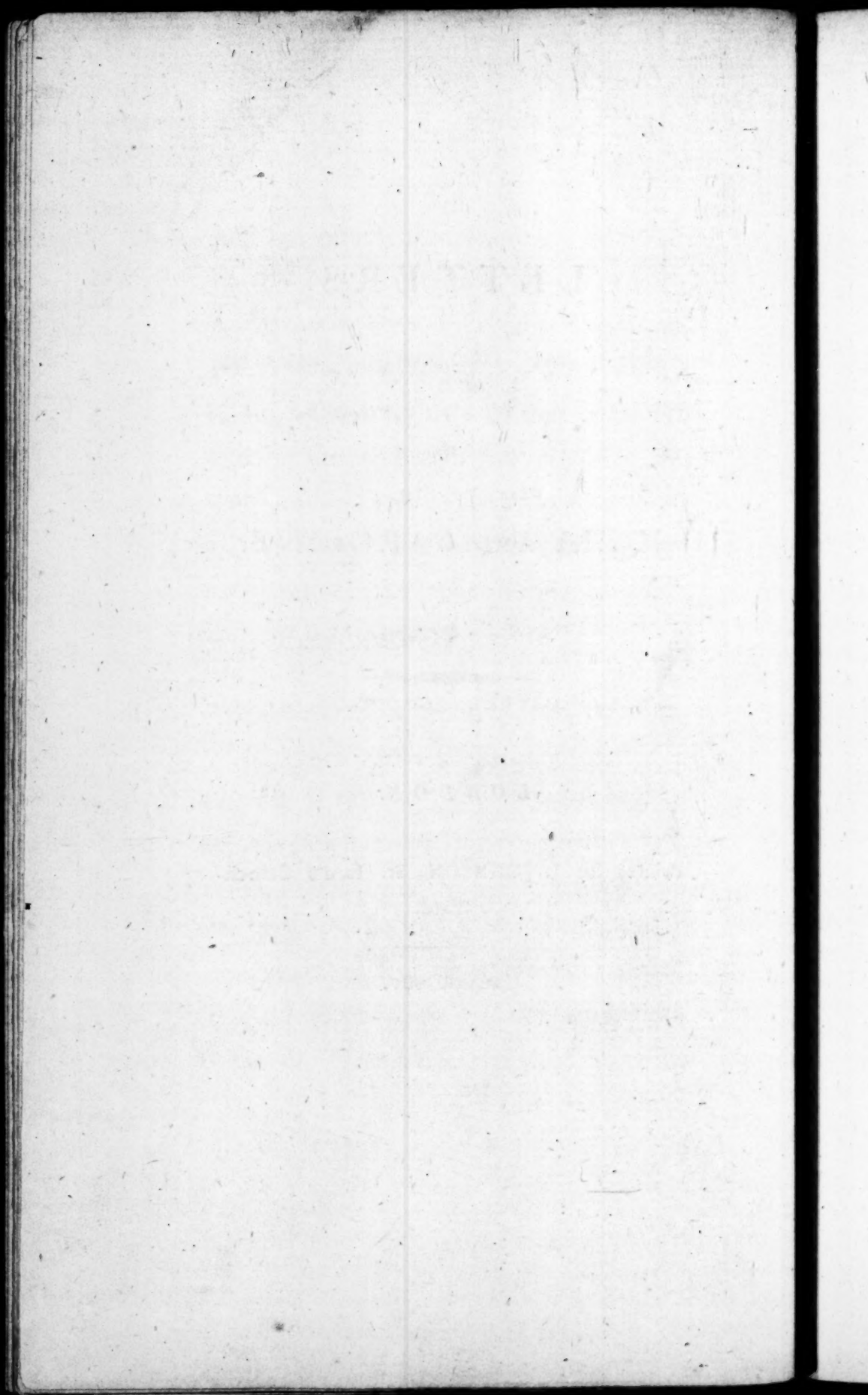
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L O N D O N:

Printed for J. JOHNSON, St. Paul's Church-  
Yard.

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## JULIA AND CAROLINE.

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### LETTER I.

#### JULIA TO CAROLINE.

**I**N vain, dear Caroline, you urge me  
to *think*, I profess only to *feel*.

“*Reflect upon my own feelings ! analyze  
“ my notions of happiness ! explain to  
“ you my system !—*” My system ! But  
I have *no* system : *that* is the very dif-  
ference between us. My notions of  
happiness cannot be resolved into

B 2

simple,

simple, fixed, principles. Nor dare I even attempt to analyse them, the subtle essence would escape in the process: Just punishment to the alchemist in morality!—You, Caroline are of a more sedate, contemplative character.

Philosophy becomes the rigid mistress of your life, enchanting enthusiasm the companion of mine. Suppose she lead me now and then in pursuit of a meteor; am not I happy in the chase? When one illusion vanishes, another shall appear, and still leading me forward towards an horizon that retreats as I advance, the happy prospect of futurity shall vanish only with my existence.

“ Reflect upon my feelings!”—dear Caroline, is it not enough that I do feel?—

feel?—All that I dread is that *apathy* which philosophers call tranquillity. You tell me that by continually *indulging* I shall weaken my natural sensibility; are not all the faculties of the soul improved, refined by exercise, and why shall *this* be excepted from the general law?

But I must not you tell me, indulge my taste for romance and poetry, lest I waste that sympathy on *fiction* which *reality* so much better deserves. My dear friend, let us cherish the precious propensity to pity! no matter what the object; sympathy with fiction or reality, arises from the same disposition.

When the sigh of compassion rises in my bosom, when the spontaneous tear starts from my eye, what frigid mo-

ralist shall "stop the genial current of the soul," shall say to the tide of passion, *so far shalt thou go, and no farther?*—Shall man presume to circumscribe that which Providence has left unbounded?

But Oh Caroline! if our feelings as well as our days are numbered; if by the immutable law of nature, apathy be the sleep of passion, and languor the inevitable consequence of exertion; if indeed the pleasures of life are so ill-proportioned to its duration, oh may that duration be shortened to me!—Kind heaven, let not my soul die before my body!

Yes, if at this instant my guardian genius were to appear before me, and offering me the choice of my future  
1
destiny;



destiny; on the one hand the even temper, the poised judgment, the stoical serenity of philosophy; on the other, the eager genius, the exquisite sensibility of enthusiasm:—If the angel said to me “choose.”—The lot of the one is great pleasure, and great pain—great virtues, and great defects—ardent hope, and severe disappointment—Extacy and despair. The lot of the other is calm happiness unmixed with violent grief, virtue without heroism—respect without admiration, and a length of life, in which to every moment is allotted its proper portion of felicity—Gracious genius, I should exclaim, if half my existence must be the sacrifice, take it; *enthusiasm is my choice.*

Such, my dear friend, would be my choice were I a man; as a woman, how much more readily should I determine !

What has woman to do with philosophy ? The graces flourish not under her empire ; a woman's part in life is to please, and Providence has assigned to her *success* all the pride and pleasure of her being.

Then leave us our weakness, leave us our follies, they are our best arms.

“ Leave us to trifle with more grace and ease,

“ Whom folly pleases and whose follies please.

The moment grave sense, and solid merit appear, adieu the bewitching caprice, the “ *lively nonsense*,” the exquisite,

site, yet childish susceptibility which charms, interests, captivates.—Believe me, our *amiable defects* win more than our noblest virtues. Love requires sympathy, and sympathy is seldom connected with a sense of superiority. I envy none their “*painful pre-eminence*.” Alas! whether it be deformity or excellence which makes us say with Richard the Third,

“ I am myself alone ! ”

it comes to much the same thing. Then let us, Caroline, content ourselves to gain in love what we lose in esteem.

Man is to be held only by the *slightest* chains ; with the idea that he  
can

can break them at pleasure, he submits to them in sport; but his pride revolts against the power to which his *reason* tells him he ought to submit. What then can woman gain by reason? Can she prove by argument that she is amiable? or demonstrate that she is an angel?

Vain was the industry of the artist, who, to produce the image of perfect beauty, selected from the fairest faces their most faultless features. Equally vain must be the efforts of the philosopher, who would excite the idea of mental perfection, by patching together an assemblage of party-coloured virtues.

Such, I had almost said, is my *system*, but I mean my *sentiments*. I am not  
accurate



accurate enough to compose a *system*.  
After all, how vain are systems! and  
theories and reasonings!

We may *declaim*, but what do we  
really know? All is uncertainty—Hu-  
man prudence does nothing—Fortune  
every thing; I leave every thing there-  
fore to fortune; *you* leave nothing. Such  
is the difference between us,—and  
which shall be the happiest, time alone  
can decide.

Farewell, dear Caroline, I love you  
better than I thought I could love a  
philosopher.

Your ever affectionate

JULIA.

LET-

## LETTER II.

## CAROLINE'S ANSWER TO JULIA.

AT the hazard of ceasing to be "*charming*," "*interesting*," "*captivating*," I must, dear Julia, venture to reason with you, to examine your favorite doctrine of "*amiable defects*," and if possible to dissipate that unjust dread of perfection which you seem to have continually before your eyes.

It is the sole object of a woman's life, you say, to *please*. Her amiable defects *please* more than her noblest virtues, her follies more than her wisdom, her caprice more than her temper, and *something*, a nameless something, which

no

no art can imitate and no science can teach, more than all.

*Art*, you say, spoils the graces and corrupts the heart of woman; and at best can produce only a cold model of perfection; which, though perhaps strictly conformable to *rule*, can never touch the soul, or please the unprejudiced, like one simple stroke of genuine nature.

I have often observed, dear Julia, that an inaccurate use of words produces such a strange confusion in all reasoning, that often in the heat of debate, the combatants, unable to distinguish their friends from their foes, fall promiscuously on both. A skilful disputant knows well how to take advantage of this confusion, and some-  
time

times endeavours to create it. I don't know whether I am to suspect you of such a design; but I must guard against it.

You have with great address availed yourself of the *two* ideas connected with the word *art*; first as opposed to simplicity it implies artifice, and next as opposed to ignorance, it comprehends all the improvements of science, which, leading us to search for general causes, rewards us with a dominion over their dependent effects. That which instructs how to pursue the objects which we may have in view, with the greatest probability of success. All men who act from general principles are so far philosophers. Their objects may be, when attained, insufficient to their happiness,



pinefs, or they may not previously have known all the neceffary means to obtain them. But they muft not therefore complain, if they do not meet with fuccefs which they have no right, at leaft they have no reafon to expect.

Parrhafius, in collecting the moft admired excellencies from various models, to produce perfection, argued from general principles that mankind would admire what they had before admired.—So far he was a philofopher. But he was difappointed of fuccefs—Yes, for he was ignorant of the caufe neceffary to produce it. The feparate features might be perfect, but perhaps in their union he forgot to give the whole countenance a peculiar *expreflion*.

There

There was, as you say, a *something* wanting, which his science had not taught him. He should then have set himself to examine what that *something* was, and how it was to be obtained. His want of success arose from the *insufficiency*, not the *fallacy* of theory. Your object, dear Julia, we will suppose is "to please." If general observation and experience have taught you that slight accomplishments, and a trivial character, succeed more certainly in obtaining this end, than higher worth, and sense, you act from principle in rejecting the one and aiming at the other. You have discovered, or think you have discovered, the secret causes which produce the desired effect, and you employ them.

Do

Do not call this *instinct* or *nature* ; this also, though you scorn it, is *philosophy*.

But when you come soberly to reflect, you have a feeling in your mind that reason and cool judgment disapprove of the part you are acting.

Let us, however, distinguish between disapprobation of the *object* and the *means*.

Averse as enthusiasm is to the retrograde motion of analysis, let me, my dear friend, lead you one step backward.

*Why* do you wish to please ? I except at present from the question, the desire to please, arising from a passion which requires a reciprocal return. Confined as *this* wish must be in a woman's heart to one object alone, when

C

you

you say, Julia, *that the admiration of others*, will be absolutely necessary to your happiness, I must suppose you mean to express only a *general* desire to please?

Then under this limitation—let me ask you again, why do you wish to please?

Do not let a word stop you. The word *vanity* conveys to us a disagreeable idea. There seems something *selfish* in the sentiment—That all the pleasure we feel in pleasing others, arises from the gratification it affords to our own *vanity*.

We refine, and explain, and never can bring ourselves fairly to make a confession, which, at the very moment we make it, we are sensible must lower



us in the opinion of others, and consequently mortify the very *vanity* we would conceal. So strangely then do we deceive ourselves as to deny the existence of a motive, which at the instant prompts the denial. But let us, dear Julia, exchange the word *vanity* for a less odious word, self-complacency; let us acknowledge that we wish to please, because the success raises our self-complacency. If you ask why raising our self-approbation gives us pleasure, I must answer, that I do not know. Yet I see and feel that it does; I observe that the voice of numbers is capable of raising the highest transport or the most fatal despair. The eye of man seems to possess a fascinating power over his

fellow-creatures, to raise the blush of shame or the glow of pride.

I look around me and I see riches, titles, dignities pursued with such eagerness by thousands, only as the signs of distinction. Nay, are not all these things sacrificed the moment they cease to be distinctions. The moment the prize of glory is to be won by other means, do not millions sacrifice their fortunes, their peace, their health, their lives, for *fame*. Then amongst the highest pleasures of human beings, I must place self-approbation. With this belief, let us endeavour to secure it in the greatest extent, and to the longest duration.

Then, Julia, the wish to please becomes only a secondary motive subordinate

dinate to the desire I have to secure my own self-complacency. We will examine how far they are connected.

In reflecting upon my own mind, I observe that I am flattered by the opinion of others, in proportion to the opinion I have previously formed of their judgment ; or, I perceive that the opinion of *numbers* merely as *numbers* has power to give me great pleasure or great pain. I would unite both these pleasures if I could, but in general I cannot—They are incompatible. The opinion of the vulgar crowd, and the enlightened individual, the applause of the highest, and the lowest of mankind, cannot be obtained by the same means.

Another question then arises, whom shall we wish to please—We must choose, and be decided in the choice.

You say that you are proud, I am prouder—You will be content with indiscriminate admiration—Nothing will content me but what is *select*. As long as I have the use of my reason—as long as my heart can feel “the delightful sense of a well-earned praise,” I will fix my eye on the highest pitch of excellence, and steadily endeavour to attain it.

Conscious of her worth, and daring to assert it, I would have a woman, early in life, know that she is capable of filling the heart of a man of sense and merit—That she is worthy to be his companion and friend. With all  
the



the energy of her soul, with all the powers of her understanding, I would have a woman endeavour to please those she esteems and loves.

She runs a risk, you will say, of never meeting her equal—Hearts and understandings of a superior order are seldom met with in the world; or when met with, it may not be her particular good fortune to win them—True, but if ever she *wins*, she will *keep* them; and the prize appears to me well worth the pains and difficulty of attaining.

I too, Julia, admire and feel enthusiasm; but I would have philosophy directed to the highest objects. I dread apathy, as much as you can, and I would endeavour to prevent it,

not by sacrificing half my existence, but by enjoying the whole with moderation.

You ask why exercise does not increase sensibility, and why sympathy with imaginary distresses will not also increase the disposition to sympathise with what is real? Because pity should, I think, always be associated with the active desire to relieve. If it be suffered to become a *passive sensation*, it is a *useless weakness*, not a virtue. The species of reading you speak of must be hurtful, even in this respect, to the mind, as it indulges all the luxury of woe in sympathy with fictitious distresses, without requiring the exertion which reality demands : Besides, universal experience proves to us that habit, so far from increasing

creasing sensibility, absolutely destroys it, by familiarising it with objects of distress.

Let me, my dear friend, appeal even to your own experience in the very instance you mention. Is there any pathetic writer in the world, who could move you as much at the "twentieth reading," as at the first. Speak naturally, and at the third or fourth reading, you would probably say, "It is very pathetic, but I have read it before—I liked it better the first time," that is to say, it *did* touch me once—I know it *ought* to touch me now, but it *does* not; beware of this!—Do not let life become "*as tedious as a twice told tale.*"

Fare-

Farewel, dear Julia ; this is the answer of fact against eloquence, philosophy against enthusiasm. You appeal from my understanding to my heart—I appeal from the heart to the understanding of my judge ; and ten years hence the decision perhaps will be in my favour.

Yours, sincerely,

CAROLINE.

LET.



## LETTER III.

CAROLINE TO JULIA,

*On her intended Marriage.*

INDEED, my dear Julia, I hardly know how to venture to give you my advice upon a subject, which ought to depend so much upon your own taste and feelings. My opinion and my wishes I could readily tell you; the idea of seeing you united and attached to my brother, is certainly the most agreeable to me; but I am to divest myself of the partiality of a sister, and to consider my brother and Lord V——, as equal candidates for your preference; *equal* I mean in your regard, for you say that “*Your heart is*

“ *not yet decided in its choice,*” and this is what puzzles you most, for that—“ If “ that oracle would declare itself in “ intelligible terms, you would not “ hesitate a moment to obey its dictates.” But my dear Julia, is there not another, a *safer*, I do not say a *better* oracle, to be consulted ? your reason. Whilst the “ doubtful beam still nods “ from side to side,” you may with a steady hand weigh your own motives, and determine what things will be essential to your happiness, and what *price* you will pay for them, for

“ Each pleasure has its *price*, and they who pay  
 “ Too much of pain, but squander life away.”

Do me the justice to believe that I do not quote these lines of Dryden as  
 being

being the finest poetry he ever wrote ;  
for poets, you know, as Waller wittily  
observed, never succeed so well in  
*truth*, as in *fiction*.

Since we cannot in life expect to  
realize all our *wishes*, we must distin-  
guish those which claim the rank of  
*wants*. We must separate the fanciful  
from the real, or at least make the one  
subservient to the other.

It is of the utmost importance to you,  
more particularly, to take every pre-  
caution before you decide for life, be-  
cause disappointment and restraint af-  
terwards would be insupportable to  
*your* temper,

You have often declared to me, my  
dear friend, that your love of poetry,  
and of all the refinements of literary  
and

and romantic pursuits is so intimately  
 “ interwoven in your mind, that no-  
 “ thing could separate them, without  
 “ destroying the whole fabric.”

Your tastes, you say, are fixed ; if  
 they are so, you must be doubly careful  
 to insure their gratification. If you  
 cannot make *them* subservient to exter-  
 nal circumstances, you should cer-  
 tainly, if it be in your power, choose a  
 situation in which circumstances will  
 be subservient to them. If you are  
 convinced that you could not adopt  
 the tastes of another, it will be ab-  
 solutely necessary for your happiness to  
 live with one whose tastes are similar  
 to your own.

The belief in that sympathy of souls  
 which the poets suppose declares itself •  
 between



between two people at first sight, is perhaps as absurd as the late fashionable belief in animal magnetism. But there is a sympathy which, if it be not the *foundation*, may be called the *cement* of affection. Two people could not I should think retain any lasting affection for each other, without a mutual sympathy in *taste* and in their diurnal occupations, and domestic pleasures. This you will allow, my dear Julia, even in a fuller extent than I do. Now, my brother's tastes, character, and habits of life are so very different from Lord V——'s, that I scarcely know how you can compare them; at least before you can decide which of the two would make you the happiest in life, you must determine what kind of life you may wish

wish to lead ; for my brother, though he might make *you* very happy in domestic life, would not make the Countess of V—— happy ; nor would Lord V—— make Mrs. Percy happy. They must be two different women ; with different habits, and different wishes ; so that you must divide yourself, my dear Julia, like Araspes, into two selves ; I do not say into a bad and a good self ; choose some other epithets to distinguish them, but distinct they must be—so let them now declare and decide their pretensions ; and let the victor have not only the honours of a triumph, but all the prerogatives of victory. Let the subdued be subdued for life—Let the victor take every precaution which policy can dictate, to prevent the possi-

bility of future contests with the vanquished.

But, without talking poetry to you, my dear friend, let me seriously recommend it to you to examine your own mind carefully, and if you find that public diversions and public admiration, dissipation, and all the pleasures of riches and high rank, are really and truly essential to your happiness, direct your choice accordingly. Marry Lord V——, he has a large fortune, extensive connexions, and an exalted station; his own taste for show and expence, his family pride, and personal vanity, will all tend to the end you propose. Your house, table, equipages, may be all in the highest style of magnificence. Lord V——'s easiness

D

of

of temper and fondness for you will readily give you that entire ascendancy over his pleasures, which your abilities give you over his understanding. He will not controul your wishes; you may gratify them to the utmost bounds of his fortune, and perhaps beyond those bounds; you may have entire command at home and abroad. If *these* are your objects, Julia, take them, they are in your power. But remember, you must take with them their necessary concomitants—the restraints upon your time, upon the choice of your friends and your company, which high life imposes; the *ennui* subsequent to dissipation; the mortifications of rivalry in beauty, wit, rank, and magnificence; the trouble of



managing a large fortune, and the chance of involving your affairs and your family in difficulty and distress; these and a thousand more evils you must submit to. You must renounce all the pleasures of the heart and of the imagination; you must give up the idea of cultivating literary taste; you must not expect from your husband equal friendship and confidence, or any of the delicacies of affection—you govern him, he cannot therefore be your equal; you may be a fond mother, but you cannot educate your children, you will neither have the time, nor the power to do it; you must trust them to a governess. In the selection of your friends, and in the enjoyment of their company and conversation, you will be still

more restrained ; in short, you must give up all the pleasures of domestic life, for that is not in this case, the life you have chosen. But you will exclaim against me for supposing you capable of making such a choice—such sacrifices—I am sure, *next to my brother*, I am the last person in the world who would wish you to make them.

You have another choice, my dear Julia ; domestic life is offered you, by one who has every wish, and every power, to make it agreeable to you ; by one whose tastes resemble your own ; who would be a judge and a fond admirer of all your perfections. You would have perpetual motives to cultivate every talent, and to exert every power of pleasing for his sake—  
for

for *his* sake, whose penetration no improvement would escape, and whose affection would be susceptible of every proof of yours. Am I drawing too flattering a picture?—A sister's hand may draw a partial likeness, but still it will be a likeness. At all events, my dear Julia, you would be certain of the mode of life you would lead with my brother. The regulation of your time and occupations would be your own. In the education of your family you would meet with no interruptions or restraint. You would have no governess to counteract, no strangers to intrude ; you might follow your own judgment, or yield to the judgment of one, who would never re-

quire you to submit to his opinion, but to his reasons.

All the pleasures of friendship you would enjoy in your own family in the highest perfection, and you would have for your sister, the friend of your infancy,

CAROLINE.

LET.



## LETTER IV.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——,

*Upon her intended separation from her  
husband.*

YOU need not fear, my dear lady V——, that I should triumph in the accomplishment of my prophecies; or that I should reproach you for having preferred your own opinion to my advice. Believe me, my dear Julia, I am your friend, nor would the name of *sister* have increased my friendship.

Five years have made then so great a change in your feelings and views of life, that a few days ago, when my letter

to you on your marriage, accidentally  
 fell into your hands "*you were struck*  
 "*with a species of astonishment at your*  
 "*choice, and you burst into tears in an*  
 "*agony of despair, on reading the wretched*  
 "*doom foretold to the wife of Lord V——.*  
 "*A doom,*" you add, "*which I feel*  
 "*hourly accomplishing, and which I see no*  
 "*possibility of averting, but by a separation*  
 "*from a husband, with whom, I now*  
 "*think, it was madness to unite myself.*"  
 Your opinion, I must already know  
 upon this subject, "*as the same argu-*  
 "*ments which should have prevented me*  
 "*from making such a choice, ought now to*  
 "*determine me to abjure it.*"

You say, dear Julia, that my letter  
 struck you with despair—despair is  
 almost always either madness or folly;  
 it

it obtains, it deserves, nothing from mankind but pity ; and pity, though it be a-kin to love, has yet a secret affinity to contempt. In strong minds, despair is an acute disease ; the prelude to great exertion. In weak minds, it is a chronic distemper, followed by incurable indolence. Let the crisis be favourable, and resume your natural energy. Instead of suffering the imagination to dwell with unavailing sorrow on the past, let us turn our attention towards the future. When an evil is irremediable, let us acknowledge and bear it—acknowledge it—for there is no power to which we submit so certainly, as to necessity. With our hopes, our wishes cease. Imagination has a contracting, as well as an expansive faculty. The prisoner,

prisoner, who, deprived of all that we conceive to constitute the pleasures of life, could interest or occupy himself with the labours of a spider, was certainly a philosopher. He enjoyed all the means of happiness that were left in his power.

I know, my dear lady V——, that words have little effect over grief; and I do not, I assure you, mean to insult you with the parade of stoical philosophy. But consider, your error is not perhaps so great as you imagine. Certainly, they who at the beginning of life, can with a steady eye look *through the long perspective* of distant years, who can in one view comprise all the different objects of happiness and misery, who can compare accurately and justly estimate



estimate their respective degrees of importance ; and who, after having formed such a calculation, are capable of acting uniformly, in consequence of their own conviction, are the *wisest*, and as far as prudence can influence our fortune; the *happiest* of human beings, Next to this favoured class, are those who can perceive, and repair their own errors ; who can stop at any given period, to take a new view of life. If unfortunate circumstances have denied you a place in the first rank, you may, dear Julia, secure yourself a station in the second. Is not the conduct of a woman, after her marriage, of infinitely more importance than her previous choice, whatever it may have been ?  
 then

then now consider what yours should be.

You say, that it is easier to *break* a chain than to *stretch* it; but, remember that when broken, your part of the chain, Julia, will still remain with you, and fetter and disgrace you through life. Why should a woman be so circumspect in her choice? Is it not because when once made she must abide by it. "She sets her life upon the cast, and she must stand the hazard of the die." From domestic uneasiness a man has a thousand resources; in middling life, the tavern; in high life, the gaming table suspends the anxiety of thought. Dissipation, ambition, business, the occupation of a profession; change of place; change of company, afford him agreeable

agreeable and honourable relief from domestic chagrin. If his home become tiresome, he leaves it—If his wife become disagreeable to him, he leaves her, and in leaving her loses *only* a wife. But what resource has a woman?—Precluded from all the occupations common to the other sex, she loses even those peculiar to her own. She has no remedy, from the company of a man she dislikes, but a separation; and this remedy, desperate as it is, is allowed only to a certain class of women in society; to those whose fortune affords them the means of subsistence, and whose friends have secured to them a separate maintenance. A peeress then probably can leave her husband if she wish it; a peasant's wife  
can-

cannot; she depends upon the character and privileges of a wife for actual subsistence. Her *domestic care*, if not her *affection*, is secured to her husband; and it is just that it should. He sacrifices his liberty, his labour, his ingenuity, his time, for the support and protection of his wife; and in proportion to his protection, is his power.

In higher life, where the sacrifices of both parties in the original union are more equal, the evils of a separation are more nearly balanced. But even here, the wife who has hazarded least suffers the most by the dissolution of the partnership; she loses a great part of her fortune, and of the conveniences and luxuries of life. She loses her home—her rank in society. She loses both the  
repellant



repellant and the attractive power of a mistress of a family. " Her occupation is gone." She becomes a wanderer through life. Whilst her youth and beauty last, she may enjoy that species of delirium, caused by public admiration : fortunate if habit does not destroy the power of this charm, before the season of its duration expire. It was said to be the wish of a celebrated modern beauty, " that she might not survive her nine and twentieth birthday." I have often heard this wish quoted, from its extravagance ; but I always admired it for its good sense. The lady foresaw the inevitable doom of her declining years. Her apprehensions for the future embittered even her enjoyment of the present ; and she

2

had

had resolution enough to offer to take a "bond of fate," to sacrifice one half of her life, to secure the pleasure of the other.

But dear lady V——, probably this wish was made at some distance from the destined period of its accomplishment. On the eve of her nine and twentieth birth-day, the lady perhaps might have felt inclined to retract her prayer. At least we should provide for the cowardice which might seize the female mind at such an instant. Even the most wretched life has power to attach us. None can be more wretched than the old age of a dissipated beauty.

Unless, lady V——, it be that of a woman, who, to all her evils has the addition of remorse, for having abjured

jured her duties and abandoned her family. Such is the situation of a woman who separates from her husband. Reduced to go the same insipid round of public amusements, yet more restrained than an unmarried beauty in youth, yet more miserable in age, the superiority of her genius and the sensibility of her heart, become her greatest evils. She, indeed, must *pray* for *indifference*. Avoided by all her family connections, hated and despised where she might have been loved and respected, solitary in the midst of society; she feels herself deserted at the time of life when she most wants social comfort and assistance.

Dear Julia, whilst it is yet in your power secure to yourself a happier fate ;

E

retire

retire to the bosom of your own family ; prepare for yourself a new society ; perform the duties, and you shall soon enjoy the pleasures of domestic life ; educate your children, whilst they are young it shall be your occupation, as they grow up it shall be your glory. Let me anticipate your future success, when they shall appear such as you can make them, when the world shall ask “ Who educated these amiable “ young women ? Who formed their “ character ? Who cultivated the talents of this promising young man ? “ Why does this whole family live together so perfectly united ? ” With one voice, dear Julia, your children shall name their mother ; she who in the bloom of youth checked herself in the career



career of dissipation, and turned all the ability and energy of her mind to their education.

Such will be your future fame. In the mean time, before you have formed for yourself companions in your own family you will want a society suited to your taste. “ Disgusted as you have been with  
“ frivolous company, you say that you  
“ wish to draw around you a society of  
“ literary and estimable friends, whose  
“ conversation and talents shall delight  
“ you, and who at the same time that  
“ they are excited to display their own  
“ abilities, shall be a judge of yours.”

But dear lady V——, the possibility of your forming such a society, must depend on your having a home to receive, a character and consequence in

life to invite and justify it. The opinion of numbers is necessary to excite the ambition of individuals. To be a female Mecænas you must have power to confer favours, as well as judgment to discern merit.

What castles in the air are built by the synthetic wand of imagination, which vanish when exposed to the analysis of reason!

Then, Julia, supposing that Lord V——, as your husband, becomes a negative quantity, as to your happiness, yet he will acquire another species of value as the master of your family, and the father of your children. As a person who supports your public consequence, and your private self-complacency. Yes, dear lady V——, he will increase your self-complacency ; for do  
you

you not think, that when your husband sees his children prosper under your care, his family united under your management—whilst he feels your merit at home, and hears your praises abroad, do you not think he will himself learn to respect and love you? You say that “*he is not a judge of female excellence; that he has no real taste, that vanity is his ruling passion.*” Then if his judgment be dependant on the opinion of others, he will be the more easily led by the public voice, and you will command his suffrages of the public. If he has not taste enough to approve, he will have vanity enough to be proud of you; and a vain man insensibly begins to love that of which he is proud. Why does lord V—— love his buildings, his paintings, his

equipages? It is not for their intrinsic value; but because they are means of distinction to him. Let his wife become a greater distinction to him, and on the same principles he will prefer her. Set an example then, dear lady V——, of domestic virtue; your talents shall make it admired, your rank shall make it conspicuous. You are ambitious, Julia, you love praise; you have been used to it, you cannot live happily without it.

Fame and praise are mental *luxuries* which become, from habit, absolutely necessary to our existence; and in purchasing them we must pay the price set upon them by society. The more curious, the more avaricious we become of this “aerial coin,” the more it



is our interest to preserve its currency and increase its value. You, my dear Julia, in particular, who have amassed so much of it, should not cry down its price, for your own sake!—Do not then say in a fit of disgust, that “you are grown too wise now to value applause.”

If, during youth, your appetite for applause was indiscriminate, and indulged to excess, you are now more difficult in your choice, and are become an *epicure* in your *taste* for praise.

Adieu, my dear Julia, I hope still to see you as happy in domestic life, as

Your ever affectionate  
and sincere friend,

CAROLINE.

LETTER V.

CAROLINE TO LADY V—,

*On her conduct after her separation from her  
husband.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A delicacy, of which I now begin to repent, has of late prevented me from writing to you. I am afraid I shall be abrupt, but it is necessary to be explicit. Your conduct ever since your separation from your husband, has been anxiously watched from a variety of motives, by his family and your own—it has been blamed. Reflect upon your own mind and examine with what justice.

Last

Last summer when I was with you I observed a change in your conversation, and the whole turn of your thoughts. I perceived an unusual impatience of restraint; a confusion in your ideas when you began to reason,—an eloquence in your language, when you began to declaim, which convinced me, that from whatever cause the powers of your reason had been declining, and those of your imagination rapidly increasing, the boundaries of right and wrong seemed to be no longer marked in your mind. Neither the rational hope of happiness nor a sense of duty governed you; but some unknown, wayward power seemed to have taken possession of your understanding, and to have thrown  
every

every thing into confusion. You appeared peculiarly averse to philosophy : let me recall your own words to you ; you asked “ of what use philosophy  
 “ could be to beings who had no free  
 “ will, and how the ideas of just punish-  
 “ ment and involuntary crime could be  
 “ reconciled ? ”

Your understanding involved itself in metaphysical absurdity. In conversing upon literary subjects one evening, in speaking of the striking difference between the conduct and the understanding of the great Lord Bacon, you said, that “ it by no means surprised you,  
 “ that to an enlarged mind, accustomed  
 “ to consider the universe as one vast  
 “ *whole*, the conduct of that little  
 “ animated atom, that inconsiderable  
 “ part



“part *self*, must be too insignificant to  
 “fix or merit attention. It was no,  
 “thing,” you said, “in the general mass  
 “of vice and virtue, happiness and  
 “misery.” I believe I answered,  
 “that it might be *nothing* compared to  
 “the great *whole*, but it was *every thing*  
 “to the individual.” Such were your  
 opinions in theory; you must know  
 enough of the human heart, to perceive  
 their tendency when reduced to prac-  
 tice. Speculative opinions, I know, have  
 little influence over the practice of those  
 who *act* much and think little; but I  
 should conceive their power to be con-  
 siderable over the conduct of those  
 who have much time for reflection and  
 little necessity for action. In one case  
 the habit of action governs the thoughts  
 upon

upon any sudden emergency ; in the other, the thoughts govern the actions. The truth or falsehood then of speculative opinions is of much greater consequence to *our* sex than to *the other* ; as *we* live a life of reflection, *they* of action.

Re-trace then, dear Julia, to your mind the course of your thoughts for some time past ; discover the cause of this revolution in your opinions ; judge yourself ; and remember, that in the *mind* as well as in the body, the highest pitch of disease is often attended with an unconsciousness of its existence. If, then lady V——, upon receiving my letter, you should feel averse to this self-examination, or if you should imagine it to be useless, I no longer *advise*, I *command*

*mand* you, quit your present abode; come to me; fly from the danger and be safe.

Dear Julia, I must assume this peremptory tone; if you are angry, I must disregard your anger; it is the anger of disease, the anger of one who is roused from that sleep which would end in death.

I respect the equality of friendship; but this equality permits, nay requires the temporary ascendancy I assume. In real friendship the judgment, the genius, the prudence of each party become the common property of both. Even if they are equals they may not be so *always*. Those transient fits of passion, to which the best and wisest are liable, may deprive even the superior of the

advantage of their reason. She then has still in her friend, an *impartial*, though perhaps an inferior judgment; each becomes the guardian of the other, as their mutual safety may require.

Heaven seems to have granted this double chance of virtue and happiness, as the peculiar reward of friendship.

Use it then, my dear friend; accept the assistance you could so well return. Obey me; I shall judge of you by your resolution at this crisis; on it depends your fate, and my friendship.

Your sincere,  
and affectionate

CAROLINE.

L E T.



LETTER VI.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——,

*Just before she went to France.*

June 17th.

THE time is now come, Lady V——, when I must bid you an eternal adieu. With what deep regret, I need not, Julia, I cannot tell you.

I burnt your letter the moment I had read it. Your past confidence I never will betray; but I must renounce all future intercourse with you. I am a sister, a wife, a mother, all these connections forbid me to be longer your friend. In misfortune, in sickness, or in poverty, I never would have forsaken

saken you ; but infamy I cannot share. I would have gone, I went, to the brink of the precipice to save you ; with all my force I held you back ; but in vain. But why do I vindicate my conduct to you now ? Accustomed as I have always been, to think your approbation necessary to my happiness, I forgot that henceforward your opinion is to be nothing to me, or mine to you.

Oh Julia, the idea, the certainty, that you must, if you live, be in a few years, in a few months perhaps, reduced to absolute want—in a foreign country—without a friend—a protector—the fate of women, who have fallen from a state as high as yours—the names of L——, of G———, the

the horror I feel at joining your name to theirs, impels me to make one more attempt to save you.

Companion of my earliest years ! friend of my youth ! my beloved Julia !—by the happy innocent hours we have spent together---by the love you had for me—by the respect you bear to the memory of your mother—by the agony, with which your father will hear of the loss of his daughter—by all that has power to touch your mind—I conjure you, I implore you to pause !—Farewel !

CAROLINE.

F

LET-

LETTER VII.

CAROLINE TO LORD V—,

*Written a few months after the date of the  
preceding letter.*

MY LORD,

THOUGH I am too sensible that all connection between my unfortunate friend and her family must for some time have been dissolved, I venture now to address myself to your lordship.

On Wednesday last, about half after six o'clock in the evening, the following note was brought to me ; it had been written with such a trembling  
hand



hand that it was scarcely legible ; but  
I knew the writing too well.

“ If you ever loved me, Caroline,  
“ read this—do not tear it the moment  
“ you see the name of Julia—she has  
“ suffered—she is humbled—I left  
“ France with the hope of seeing you  
“ once more—but now I am so near  
“ you my courage fails, and my heart  
“ sinks within me—I have no friend  
“ upon earth—I deserve none—Yet I  
“ cannot help wishing to see once more  
“ before I die the friend of my youth,  
“ to thank her with my last breath.

“ But dear Caroline, if I must not  
“ see you, write to me, if possible, one  
“ line of consolation.

“ Tell me, is my father living—do  
“ you know any thing of my children  
“ —I dare not ask for my husband—  
“ adieu!—I am so weak that I can  
“ scarcely write—I hope I shall soon  
“ be no more—Farewel !

JULIA.”

I immediately determined to follow the bearer of this letter—Julia was waiting for my answer at a small inn, in a neighbouring village at a few miles distance—It was night when I got there—every thing was silent—all the houses were shut up, excepting one, in which we saw two or three lights glimmering through the window—this was the inn—as your lordship may imagine, it was a very miserable place  
—the

—the mistress of the house seemed to be touched with pity for the stranger—she opened the door of a small room, where she said the poor lady was resting, and retired as I entered.

Upon a low matted seat beside the fire, sat lady V—— ; she was in black, her knees were crossed, and her white, but emaciated arms flung on one side over her lap—her hands were clasped together, and her eyes fixed upon the fire—she seemed neither to hear or see any thing around her, but totally absorbed in her own reflections, to have sunk into insensibility—I dreaded to rouse her from this state of torpor ; and I believe I stood for some moments motionless—at last I moved softly towards her—she turned her head—

started up—a scarlet blush overspread her face—she grew livid again instantly, gave a faint shriek, and sunk senseless into my arms.

When she returned to herself, and found her head lying upon my shoulder, and heard my voice soothing her, with all the expressions of kindness I could think of, she smiled with a look of gratitude, which I never shall forget—like one who had been long unused to kindness, she seemed ready to pour forth all the fondness of her heart :—But as if recollecting herself better, she immediately checked her feelings—withdraw her hand from mine—thanked me—said she was quite well again—cast down her eyes, and her manner changed from tenderness to timidity.



timidity. She seemed to think that she had lost all right to sympathy, and received even the common offices of humanity with surprise—her high spirit, I saw, was quite broken.

I think I never felt such sorrow, as I did in contemplating Julia at this instant—she who stood before me sinking under the sense of inferiority, I knew to be my equal—my superior—yet by fatal imprudence, by one rash step, all her great and good and amiable qualities were irretrievably lost to the world and to herself.

When I thought that she was a little recovered, I begged of her, if she was not too much fatigued, to let me carry her home; at these words she looked at me with surprise. Her eyes filled

with tears, but without making any other reply, she suffered me to draw her arm within mine, and attempted to follow me. I had no idea how feeble she was, till she began to walk ; it was with the utmost difficulty I supported her to the door, and by the assistance of the people of the house she was lifted into the carriage—we went very slowly—when the carriage stopped she was seized with an universal tremor—she started, when the man knocked at the door, and seemed to dread its being opened. The appearance of light, and the sound of cheerful voices struck her with horror.

I could not myself help being shocked with the contrast between the dreadful situation of my friend and  
the

the happiness of the family to which I was returning.

Oh ! said she, what are these voices ?  
—Whither are you taking me ?—For heaven's sake do not let any body see me !—I assured her that she should go directly to her own apartment, and that no human being should approach her without her express permission.

Alas ! it happened at this very moment that all my children came running with the utmost gaiety into the hall to meet us, and the very circumstance which I had been so anxious to prevent happened — little Julia was amongst them. The gaiety of the children suddenly ceased the moment they saw lady V—— coming up the steps—they were struck with her me-

lancholy air, and countenance—she, leaning upon my arm, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, let me lead her in, and sunk upon the first chair she came to—I made a sign to the children to retire, but the moment they began to move lady V—— looked up—saw her daughter—and now for the first time burst into tears. The little girl did not recollect her poor mother, till she heard the sound of her voice, and then she threw her arms round her neck, crying, “Is it you, mama?”—and all the children immediately crowded round and asked, “if this “ was the same lady V——, who used “ to play with them?”

It is impossible to describe the effect these simple questions had on Julia—  
a variety



a variety of emotions seemed struggling in her countenance; she rose and made an attempt to break from the children, but could not—she had not strength to support herself. We carried her away and put her to bed; she took no notice of any body, nor did she even seem to know that I was with her; I thought she was insensible, but as I drew the curtains I heard her give a deep sigh.

I left her and carried away her little girl, who had followed us up stairs and begged to stay with her mother, but I was apprehensive that the sight of her might renew her agitation.

After I was gone they told me that she was perfectly still, with her eyes closed, and I stayed away some time,

in

in hopes that she might sleep; however, about midnight she sent to beg to speak to me; she was very ill—she beckoned to me to sit down by her bed-side—every one left the room, and when Julia saw herself alone with me she took my hand, and in a low but calm voice, she said, “I have not many hours to live,—my heart is broken —I wished to see you, to thank you whilst it was yet in my power.” She pressed my hand to her trembling lips—“Your kindness,” added she, “touches me more than all the rest—but how ashamed you must be of such a friend.—Oh Caroline! to die a disgrace to all who ever loved me!”

The tears trickled down her face and choaked her utterance—she wiped them

them away hastily—" But it is not now  
 " a time," said she, " to think of my-  
 " self—can I see my daughter?" The  
 little girl was asleep — she was  
 awakened, and I brought her to her  
 mother—Julia raised herself in her bed,  
 and summoning up all her strength—  
 " my dearest friend !" said she, putting  
 her child's hand into mine, " when I  
 " am gone, be a mother to this child—  
 " let her know my whole history, let  
 " nothing be concealed from her——  
 " Poor girl, you will live to blush at  
 " your mother's name——" she paused  
 and leant back—I was going to take  
 the child away, but she held out her  
 arms again for her, and kissed her se-  
 veral times—" Farewel!" said she,  
 " I shall never see you again." The  
 little

little girl burst into tears—Julia wished to say something more—she raised herself again—at last she uttered these words with energy—“ my love—*be good and happy*—” she then sunk down on the pillow quite exhausted—she never spoke afterwards—I took her hand—it was cold—her pulse scarcely beat—her eyes rolled without meaning—in a few moments she expired, with her stiff and lifeless hand locked in mine.

Painful as it has been to me to recall the circumstances of her death to my imagination, I have given your lordship this exact and detailed account of my unfortunate friend's behaviour in her last moments—whatever may have been her errors, her soul never became  
callous



callous with vice. The sense of her own ill conduct was undoubtedly the immediate cause of her illness, and the remorse which had long preyed upon her mind, at length brought her to the grave—

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\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

I have the honour to be,  
my Lord, &c.

CAROLINE.

THE END.

...and the ... of the ...  
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*With the preceding*

A N  
E S S A Y  
O N T H E  
Noble Science of Self - Justification.

“ For which an eloquence that aims to vex,

“ With native tropes of anger arms the *sex*.” PARNELL.

ENDOWED, as the fair sex indisputably are, with a natural genius for the invaluable art of self-justification, it may not be displeasing to them to see its rising perfection evinced by an attempt to reduce it to a science. Possessed, as are all the fair daughters of Eve, of an hereditary propensity,

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trans-

transmitted to them undiminished through succeeding generations, to be "Soon moved with the slightest touch of blame;" very little precept and practice will confirm them in the habit, and instruct them in all the maxims of self-justification.

Candid pupil, you will readily accede to my first and fundamental axiom —

That a lady can do no wrong. But simple as this maxim may appear, and suited to the level of the meanest capacity, the talent of applying it on all the important, but more especially on all the most trivial, occurrences of domestic life, so as to secure private peace and public dominion, has hitherto



hitherto been monopolized by the female adepts in the art. \*

Excuse me for insinuating by this expression, that there may yet be amongst you some novices. To these, if there be any such, I principally address myself.

And now, lest fired with ambition you lose all by aiming at too much, let me explain and limit my first principle, "That you can do no wrong." You must be aware that real perfection is beyond the reach of mortals; nor would I have you aim at it; indeed it is not in any degree necessary to our purpose. You have heard of the established belief in human infallibility which prevailed not many centuries

ago, but since that happy period is past, leave the opinions of men to their natural perversity; their actions are the best test of their faith. Instead then of a belief in your infallibility, endeavour to enforce implicit submission to your authority. This will give you infinitely less trouble, and will answer your purpose as well.

Right and wrong, if we go to the foundation of things, are, as casuists tell us, really words of very dubious signification, perpetually varying with custom and fashion, and to be referred to, and adjusted ultimately by no other standards but opinion and force. Obtain power then by all means; power is the law of man; it is his law and yours.

But

But to return from a frivolous disquisition about right, let me teach you the art of defending the wrong. After having thus pointed out to you the "glorious end" of your labors, I must now instruct you in the equally "glorious means."

For the advantage of my subject I beg to consider you all, ladies, as married; but those who have not as yet the good fortune to have that common enemy, a husband, to combat, may in the mean time practise my precepts upon their fathers, brothers, and female friends; with caution, however, lest by discovering their arms too soon, they preclude themselves from the power of using them to the fullest advantage hereafter. I therefore recom-

mend it to them to prefer, with a philosophical moderation, the future to the present.

Timid brides, you have, probably, hitherto been addressed as angels—Prepare for the time when you shall again become mortal. Take the alarm at the first approach of blame, at the first hint of a discovery that you are any thing less than infallible. Contradict, debate, justify, recriminate, rage, weep, swoon, do any thing but yield to conviction.

I take it for granted that you have already acquired sufficient command of voice ; you need not study its compass ; going beyond its pitch has a peculiarly happy effect upon some occasions. But are you voluble enough to  
drown



drown all sense in a torrent of words? Can you be loud enough to overpower the voice of all who shall attempt to interrupt or contradict you? Are you mistress of the petulant, the peevish, and the sullen tones? Have you practised the sharpness which provokes reply, and the continual monotony which effectually precludes it, by setting your adversary to sleep? an event which is always to be considered as decisive of the victory, or at least as reducing it to a drawn battle—You and Morpheus divide the prize.

Thus prepared for an engagement, you will next, if you have not already done it, study the weak part of the character of your enemy—your husband I mean: if he be a man of high spirit,

B 4

jealous

jealous of command, and impatient of controul; one who decides for himself, and is little troubled with the insanity of minding what the world says of him, you must proceed with extreme circumspection; you must not dare to provoke the combined forces of the enemy to a regular engagement, but harrafs him with perpetual petty skirmishes; in these, though you gain little at a time, you will gradually weary the patience, and break the spirit of your opponent. If he be a man of spirit, he must also be generous; and what man of generosity will contend for trifles with a woman who submits to him in all affairs of consequence; who is in his power; who is weak, and who loves him.

“ Can

“Can superior with inferior power contend?” No, the spirit of a lion is not to be roused by the teasing of an insect.

But such a man as I have described, besides being as generous as he is brave, will probably be of an active temper; then you have an inestimable advantage; for he will set a high value upon a thing for which you have none, time; he will acknowledge the force of your arguments merely from a dread of their length; he will yield to you in trifles, particularly in trifles which do not militate against his authority, not out of regard for you, but for his time; for what man can prevail upon himself to debate three hours about what could be as well decided in three minutes.

Left

Left amongst infinite variety, the difficulty of immediate selection should at first perplex you, let me point out that matters of *taste* will afford you, of all others, the most ample and incessant subjects of debate. Here you have no criterion to appeal to. Upon the same principle, next to matters of taste, points of opinion will afford the most constant exercise to your talents. Here you will have an opportunity of citing the opinions of all the living and dead you have ever known, besides the dear privilege of repeating continually : “Nay, you never must allow that.” Or, “You can’t deny this, for it’s the universal opinion—every body says so! every body thinks so! I wonder to hear you express such an opinion!



nion ! Nobody but yourself is of that way of thinking." With innumerable other phrases with which a slight attention to polite conversation will furnish you. This mode of opposing authority to argument, and assertion to proof, is of such universal utility, that I pray you to practise it.

If the point in dispute especially be some opinion relative to your character or disposition, allow in general that " You are sure you have a great many faults, but to every specific charge, reply, " Well, I am sure I don't know, but I did not think that was one of my faults ! nobody ever accused me of that before ! Nay, I was always remarkable for the contrary ; at least before I was acquainted with you—Sir ; In my own family—

mily—"ask any of my own friends; ask any of them; they must know me best."

But if instead of attacking the material parts of your character, your husband should merely presume to advert to your manners, to some slight personal habit which might be made more agreeable to him; prove in the first place, that it is his fault that it is not agreeable to him.—His eyes are changed, or opened; but it may perhaps have been a matter almost of indifference to him, till you undertook its defence—then make it of consequence by rising in eagerness, in proportion to the insignificance of your object; if he can draw consequences, this will be an excellent lesson—if you are so tender of blame in the veriest trifle,

trifle, how unimpeachable must you be in matters of importance. As to personal habits, begin by denying that you have any ; as all personal habits if they have been of any long standing must have become involuntary, the unconscious culprit may assert her innocence without hazarding her veracity.

However, if you happen to be detected in the very fact, and a person cries, " Now, now, you are doing it ! " submit, but declare at the same moment " That it is the very first time in your whole life, you were ever known to be guilty of it ; that therefore it can be no habit, and of course no ways reprehensible.

Extend

Extend also the rage for vindication to all the objects which the most remotely concern you; take even inanimate objects under your protection. Your dress, your furniture, your property, every thing which is, or has been yours defend, and this upon the principles of the soundest philosophy; these things all compose a part of your personal merit\*; all that connected the most distantly with your idea gives pleasure or pain to others, becomes an object of blame or praise, and consequently claims your support or vindication.

In the course of the management of your house, children, family, and affairs, probably some few errors of omis-

\* Vide Hume.

sion,



sion or commission may strike your husband's pervading eye; but these errors, admitting them to be errors, you will never if you please allow to be charged to any deficiency in memory, judgment, or activity, on your part.

There are surely people enough around you to divide and share the blame—send it from one to another, till at last, by universal rejection, it is proved to belong to nobody. You will say however that facts remain unalterable; and that in some unlucky instance, in the changes and chances of human affairs, you may be proved to have been to blame. Some stubborn evidence may appear against you; an eye-witness perhaps; still you may  
 prove

prove an alibi, or balance the evidence. There is nothing equal to balancing evidence; doubt is you know the most philosophic state of the human mind, and it will be kind of you to preserve it in the breast of your husband.

Indeed the short method of denying absolutely all blameable facts, I should recommend to pupils as the best; and if in the beginning of their career as justification, they may startle at this mode, let them depend upon it that in their future practice it must become perfectly familiar. The nice distinction of simulation and dissimulation depend but on the trick of a syllable—palliation and extenuation are universally allowable in self-defence; prevarication

varication inevitably follows, and falsehood "is but in the next degree."

Yet I would not destroy this nicety of conscience too soon, it may be of use. In your first setting out, you must establish credit; in proportion to your credit, will be the value of your future asseverations.

In the mean time, however, argument and debate are allowable to the most rigid moralist. You can never perjure yourself by swearing to a false opinion.

I come now to the art of reasoning: don't be alarmed at the name of reasoning, fair pupils, I will explain to you its meaning.

If instead of the fiery tempered being, I formerly described, you

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should

should fortunately be connected with a man, who, having formed a justly high opinion of your sex, should propose to treat you as his equal, and who in any little dispute which might arise between you, should desire no other arbiter than reason; triumph in his mistaken candor, regularly appeal to the decision of reason at the beginning of every contest, and deny its jurisdiction at the conclusion. I take it for granted that you will be on the wrong side of every question, and indeed, in general, I advise you to chuse the wrong side of an argument to defend; whilst you are young in the science, it will afford the best exercise, and as you improve, the best display of your talents.

If



If then, reasonable pupils, you would succeed in argument, follow pretty nearly these instructions.

Begin by preventing, if possible, the specific statement of any position, or if reduced to it, use the most *general terms*.

Use the happy ambiguity which all languages, and which most philosophers allow. Above all things, shun definitions; they will prove fatal to you; for two persons of sense and candor, who define their terms, cannot argue long without either convincing, or being convinced, or parting in equal good humour; to prevent which, go over and over the same ground, wander as wide as possible from the point, but always with a view to return at

last precisely to the same spot from which you set out. I should remark to you that the choice of your weapons is a circumstance much to be attended to: chuse always those which your adversary cannot use. If your husband is a man of wit, you will of course undervalue a talent which is never connected with judgment: "for your part, you do not pretend to contend with him in wit.

But if he be a sober minded man, who will go link by link along the chain of an argument, follow him at first, till he grows so intent that he does not perceive whether you follow him or not; then slide back to your own station, and when with perverse patience he has at last reached the  
last

last link of the chain, with one electric shock of wit, make him quit his hold, and strike him to the ground in an instant. Depend upon the sympathy of the spectators, for to one who can understand *reason*, you will find ten who admire *wit*.

But if you should not be blessed with "a ready wit," if demonstration should in the mean time stare you in the face, do not be in the least alarmed; anticipate the blow which you could neither foresee, nor prevent. Whilst you have it yet in your power, rise with becoming magnanimity, and cry, "I give it up! I give it up! La! let us say no more about it; I do so hate disputing about trifles. I give it up!" Before an explanation on the

word trifle can take place, quit the room with flying colours.

If you are a woman of sentiment and eloquence, you have advantages of which I scarcely need apprise you. From the understanding of a man, you have always an appeal to his heart; or if not, to his *affection*, to his *weakness*. If you have the good fortune to be married to a weak man, always chuse the moment to argue with him when you have a full audience. Trust to the sublime power of numbers; it will be of use even to excite your own enthusiasm in debate; then as the scene advances, talk of his cruelty, and your sensibility, and sink with "becoming woe," into the pathos of *injured innocence*.

Besides,

Besides the heart and the weakness of your opponent, you have still another chance, in ruffling his *temper*; which, in the course of a long conversation, you will have a fair opportunity of trying; and if, for philosophers will sometimes grow warm in the defence of truth, if he should grow absolutely *angry*, you will in an inverse proportion grow calm, and wonder at his rage, though you well know it has been created by your own provocation. The by-standers, seeing anger without any adequate cause, will all be of your side. Nothing provokes an irascible man, interested in debate, and possessed of an opinion of his own eloquence, so much as to see the attention of his hearers go from



him: you will then, when he flatters himself that he has just fixed your eye with his *very best* argument, suddenly grow absent:—"Your house affairs must call you hence—or you have directions to give to your children—or the room is too hot, or too cold—the window must be opened—or door shut—or the candle wants snuffing."—Nay, without these interruptions, the simple motion of your eye may provoke a speaker; a butterfly, or the figure in a carpet may engage your attention in preference to him; or if these objects be absent, the simply averting your eye, looking through the window in quest of outward objects, will shew that your mind has not been abstracted, and will display to him at least

least your wish of not attending ; he may however possibly have lost the habit of watching your eye for approbation ; then you may assault his ear. If all other resources fail, beat with your foot that dead march to the spirits, that incessant tattoo, which so well deserves its name. Marvellous must be the patience of the much enduring man, whom some or other of these devices do not provoke ; slight causes often produce great effects ; the simple scratching of a pick-axe, properly applied to certain veins in a mine, will cause the most dreadful explosions.

Hitherto we have only professed to teach the defensive ; let me now recommend to you the offensive  
part

part of the art of justification. As a supplement to reasoning, comes re- crimination; the pleasure of proving that you are right is surely incomplete, till you have proved that your adversary is wrong; this might have been a secondary, let it now become a primary object with you; rest your own defence on it for farther security; you are no longer to consider yourself as obliged, either to deny, palliate, argue, or declaim, but simply justify yourself by criminating another; all merit, you know, is judged of by comparison. In the art of recrimination, your memory will be of the highest service to you; for you are to open and keep an account current, of all the faults, mistakes, neglects, unkindnesses of those  
you

you live with; these you are to state against your own: I need not tell you that the balance will always be in your favor. In stating matters of opinion, produce the words of the very same person which passed days, months, years before, in contradiction to what he is then saying. By displacing, disjointing words and sentences, by misunderstanding the whole, or quoting only a part of what has been said, you may convict any man of inconsistency; particularly if he be a man of genius and feeling, for he speaks generally from the impulse of the moment, and of all others can the least bear to be charged with paradoxes. So far for a husband. Recriminating is also of sovereign use in the quarrels of friends;

friends; no friend is so perfectly equable, so ardent in affection, so nice in punctilio, as never to offend; then "Note his faults and con them by rote." Say you can forgive, but you can never forget; and surely it is much more generous to forgive and remember, than to forgive and forget. On every new alarm, call the unburied ghosts from former fields of battle; range them in tremendous array, call them one by one to witness against the conscience of your enemy, and ere the battle is begun, take from them all courage to engage.

There is one case I must observe to you, in which recrimination has peculiar poignancy. If you have had it in your power to confer obligations on  
any



any one, never cease reminding them of it; and let them feel that you have acquired an indefeasible right to reproach them without a possibility of their retorting. It is a maxim with some sentimental people, "To treat their servants as if they were their friends in distress. I have observed that people of this cast make themselves amends, by treating their friends in distress as if they were their servants."

Apply this maxim—you may do it a thousand ways, especially in company. In general conversation, where every one is supposed to be on a footing, if any of your humble companions should presume to hazard an opinion contrary to yours, and should modestly

begin with, "I think—" look as the man did when he said to his servant, "You think! Sir—what business have you to think?"

Never fear to lose a friend by the habits which I recommend; reconciliations, as you have often heard it said—reconciliations are the cement of friendship; therefore friends should quarrel to strengthen their attachment, and offend each other for the pleasure of being reconciled.

I beg pardon for digressing—I was, I believe, talking of your husband, not of your friends—I have gone far out of the way.

If in your debates with your husband, you should want "Eloquence to vex him," the dull prolixity of narration, joined

joined to the complaining monotony of voice which I formerly recommended, will supply its place, and have the desired effect; Morpheus will prove propitious; then, ever and anon as the soporific charm begins to work, rouse him with interrogatories, such as, "Did not you say so? Don't you remember? Only answer me that!"

By the bye, interrogatories artfully put may lead an unsuspicious reasoner, you know, always to your own conclusion.

In addition to the patience, philosophy, and other good things which Socrates learned from his wife, perhaps she taught him this mode of reasoning.

But after all, the precepts of art, and even the natural susceptibility of  
your

your tempers, will avail you little in the sublime of our science, if you cannot command that ready enthusiasm which will make you enter into the part you are acting; that happy imagination which shall make you believe all you fear and all you invent.

Who is there amongst you who cannot or who will not justify when they are accused. Vulgar talent! the sublime of our science, is to justify before we are accused. There is no reptile so vile but what will turn when it is trodden on; but of a nicer sense and nobler species are those whom nature has endowed with antennæ, which perceive and withdraw at the distant approach of danger. Allow me another illusion; families cannot be

1

crowded

crowded too close for a female taste ;  
and analogy, I have heard, my fair pu-  
pils, is your favourite mode of rea-  
soning.

The sensitive plant is too vulgar an allusion ; but if the truth of modern naturalists may be depended upon, there is a plant which instead of receding timidly, like the sensitive plant, from the intrusive touch, angrily protrudes its venomous juices upon all who presume to meddle with it : don't you think this plant would be your fittest emblem.

Let me, however, recommend it to you, nice souls, who of the Mimosa kind, "Fear the dark cloud, and feel the coming storm," to take the utmost precaution, lest the same suscepti-

## Duty of goldsmiths



lity which you cherish as the dear means to torment others, should insensibly become a torment to yourselves.

Distinguish then between sensibility and susceptibility; between the anxious solicitude not to give offence, and the captious eagerness of vanity to prove that it ought not to have been taken; distinguish between the desire of praise and the horror of blame; can any two things be more different than the wish to improve, and the wish to demonstrate that you have never been to blame?

Observe, I only wish you to distinguish these things in your own minds; I would by no means advise you to discontinue the laudable practice of confounding them perpetually in speaking to others.

When

When you have nearly exhausted human patience in explaining, justifying, vindicating,—when in spite of all the pains you have taken, you have more than half betrayed your own vanity, you have a never-failing resource, in paying tribute to that of your opponent, as thus—

“ I am sure you must be sensible  
 “ that I should never take so much  
 “ pains to justify myself if I were in-  
 “ different to your opinion—I know  
 “ that I ought not to disturb myself  
 “ with such trifles, but nothing is a tri-  
 “ fle to me which concerns you—I  
 “ confess I am too anxious to please,  
 “ I know it’s a fault, but I can’t cure  
 “ myself of it now—Too quick sensi-  
 “ bility, I am conscious, is the defect

D 2

“ of

“ of my disposition ; it would be happier for me if I could be more indifferent I know.”

Who could be so brutal as to blame so amiable, so candid a creature ? Who would not submit to be tormented with kindness ?

When once then your captive condescends to be flattered by such arguments as these, your power is fixed ; your future triumphs can be bounded only by your own moderation ; they are at once secured and justified.

Forbear not then, happy pupils:—but, arrived at the summit of power, give a full scope to your genius, nor trust to genius alone ; to exercise in all its extent your privileged dominion, you must acquire, or rather you must pretend

tend to have acquired, infallible skill in the noble art of physiognomy ; immediately the thoughts as well as the words of your subjects are exposed to your inquiry.

Words may flatter you, but the countenance never can deceive you ; the eyes are the windows of the soul, and through them you are to watch what passes in the inmost recesses of the heart. There if you discern the slightest ideas of doubt, blame, or displeasure ; if you discover the slightest symptoms of revolt, take the alarm instantly. Conquerors must maintain their conquests, and how easily can they do this, who hold a secret correspondence with the minds of the vanquished ? Be your own spies then ;

from the looks, gestures, flightest motions of your enemies, you are to form an alphabet, a language, intelligible only to yourselves; yet by which you shall condemn them; always remembering that in sound policy, suspicion justifies punishment. In vain, when you accuse your friends of the high treason of blaming you, in vain let them plead their innocence, even of the intention. "They did not say a word which could be tortured into such a meaning." No, but "they looked daggers, though they used none."

And of this you are to be the sole judge, though there were fifty witnesses to the contrary.

How should indifferent spectators pretend to know the countenance of  
your



your friend, as well as you do? You that have a nearer, a dearer interest in attending to it? So accurate have been your observations, that no thought of their soul escapes you; nay, you often can tell even what they are going to think of.

The science of divination, certainly claims your attention; beyond the past and the present, it shall extend your dominion over the future; from slight words, half finished sentences, from silence itself you shall draw your omens, and auguries.

“ I am sure you were going to say,”  
or, “ I know such a thing was a sign  
you were inclined to be displeased with  
me.”

In the ardor of innocence, the culprit to clear himself from such imputa-

tions, incurs the imputation of a greater offence. Suppose to prove that you were mistaken, to prove that he could not have meant to blame you, he should declare, that at the moment you mention, "You  
 "were quite foreign to his thoughts,  
 "he was not thinking at all about  
 "you."

Then in truth you have a right to be angry. To one of your class of justifiers, this is the highest offence; possessed as you are of the firm opinion, that all persons, at all times, on all occasions, are intent upon you alone. Is it not less mortifying to discover that you were thought ill of, than that you were not thought of at all? "Indifference you know, sentimental  
 "pupils, is more fatal to love than  
 "even hatred."

Thus

Thus my dear pupils, I have endeavoured to provide precepts, adapted to the display of your several talents, but if there should be any amongst you, who have no talents, who can neither argue nor persuade, who have neither, sentiment nor enthusiasm, I must indeed, congratulate them; they alone are the true adepts in the science of Self-Justification; indulgent nature, often even in the weakness, provides for the protection of her creatures; just Providence, as the guard of stupidity, has enveloped it with the impenetrable armour of obstinacy.

Fair ideots! let women of sense, wit, feeling, triumph in their various arts, yours are superior. Their empire, absolute as it sometimes may be,  
is

is perpetually subject to sudden revolutions. With them, a man has some chance of equal sway, with a fool he has none. Have they hearts and understandings?—then the one may be touched, or the other in some unlucky moment [convinced; even in their very power lies their greatest danger—not so with you—In vain let the most candid of his sex attempt to reason with you; let him begin with, “Now, “my dear, only listen to reason—” You stop him at once with “No, my “dear, you know I don’t pretend “to reason; I only say that’s my opinion.”

Let him go on to prove that yours is a mistaken opinion—you are ready to acknowledge it, long before he

desires it. " You acknowledge it may  
 " be a wrong opinion ; but still it is  
 " your opinion." You do not maintain  
 it in the least, either because you be-  
 lieve it to be wrong or right, but mere-  
 ly because it is yours. Exposed as  
 you might have been to the perpetual  
 humiliation of being convinced, na-  
 ture seems kindly to have denied you  
 all perception of truth, or at least all  
 sentiment of pleasure from the per-  
 ception.

With an admirable humility, you are  
 as well contented to be in the wrong  
 as in the right ; you answer all that can  
 be said to you, with a provoking humi-  
 lity of aspect.

" Yes, I don't doubt but what you  
 " say may be very true, but I can't tell ;  
 " I don't



“ don't think myself capable of judg-  
 “ ing on these subjects ; I am sure you  
 “ must know much better than I do.  
 “ I don't pretend to say but what your  
 “ opinion is very just ; but I own I am  
 “ of a contrary way of thinking ; I al-  
 “ ways thought so and I always shall.”

Should a man with persevering tem-  
 per tell you, that he is ready to adopt  
 your sentiments if you will only ex-  
 plain them ; should he beg only to  
 have a reason for your opinion—No,  
 you can give no reason. Let him urge  
 you to say something in its defence—  
 No ; like\* Queen Anne, you will only  
 repeat the same thing over again, or be  
 silent. Silence is the ornament of your

\* Vide Duchess of Marlborough's Apology.

sex ; and in silence, if there be not wisdom, there is safety. You will then, if you please, according to your custom, sit listening to all entreaties to explain, and speak—with a fixed immutability of posture, and a pre-determined deafness of the eye, which shall put your opponent utterly out of patience ; yet still by persevering with the same complacent importance of countenance, you shall half persuade people you could speak if you would ; you shall keep them in doubt by that true want of meaning, “which puzzles more than wit ;” even because they cannot conceive the excess of your stupidity, they shall actually begin to believe that they themselves are stupid. Ignorance and doubt are the great parents of the sublime.

Your

Your adversary finding you impenetrable to argument, perhaps would try wit—but, “On the impassive ice, the lightnings play.” His eloquence or his kindness will avail less; when in yielding to you after a long debate he expects to please you, you will answer undoubtedly with the utmost propriety, “That you should be very sorry he “yielded his judgment to you; that “he is very good; that you are much “obliged to him; but, that as to the “point in dispute, it is a matter of perfect indifference to you; for your “part you have no choice at all about “it; you beg that he will do just what “he pleases; you know that it is the “duty of a wife to submit; but you “hope however, you may have an “opinion of your own.”

Remem-

Remember all such speeches as these will lose above half their effect, if you cannot accompany them with the vacant stare, the insipid smile, the passive aspect of the humbly perverse.

Whilst I write, new precepts rush upon my recollection ; but the subject is inexhaustible. I quit it with regret, fully sensible of my presumption in having attempted to instruct those, who whilst they read, will smile in the consciousness of superior powers. Adieu then my fair readers !—Long may you prosper in the practise of an art peculiar to your sex. Long may you maintain unrivalled dominion at home and abroad ; and long may your husbands rue the hour when first they made you promise “ *to obey.*”





